RETREATS FOR THE PEOPLE

C. PLATER S. J.

Thos Wall
Sutton

RETREATS FOR THE PEOPLE

OAKWOOD HALL, CHESHIRE (See p. 123).

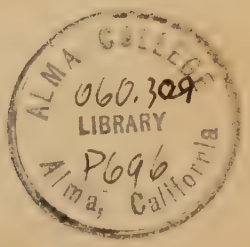
[*Frontispiece.*

RETREATS FOR THE PEOPLE

A SKETCH OF A GREAT REVIVAL

BY
CHARLES PLATER, S.J.

WITH A PREFACE BY
THE BISHOP OF SALFORD



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PREFACE

It has been said that, in the history of the Church, the twentieth century will eventually be known as the century of the laity. And it must be admitted that probably at no preceding epoch have there been the same opportunity and need for the co-operation of the faithful laity in the defence of the Church, in the promotion of her interests and in the "pacific penetration," by means of their example and intellectual influence, of the society in which they live. But it may be said with equal truth that our century is also the century of retreats. And this is just what we should expect in the ordinary course of Divine Providence. That our Catholic laity, of both sexes and of all social classes, should be fitted, always under the direction and control of ecclesiastical authority, to play the magnificent rôle which is awaiting them, it is absolutely necessary, not only that they should have a thorough training in Christian Doctrine and in the knowledge of all that appertains to their

religion and its history, which is obtained by a good Catholic education and by the reading of Catholic literature; but also that they should have frequent opportunities for what is called, even outside our own body, the "deepening of the spiritual life." It is not mere knowledge of the Faith, of the Church's constitution and her history, however extensive and accurate, but also, or rather far more, the intensity of the spiritual life and the application of religious principles to everyday practice, that will enable the Christian layman and laywoman not only to save their own souls, but to play their part great or small in saving the world around them. And this all-necessary "deepening of the spiritual life" is the work of retreats for the people. We may thank God for this "great revival" which Father Plater so admirably describes in the present volume. It is, indeed, a wonderful and inspiring story. As I wrote on another occasion:

"Never before have these invaluable aids to salvation been so freely accessible to all classes and all ages of the Faithful. But a few years ago a retreat was a spiritual luxury within the reach only of the clergy, the religious, and the leisured and well-to-do classes. Nowadays, thanks to institutions like the Cenacle Convents in Manchester, London, and Liverpool, for women and

girls, and Oakwood Hall, Romiley, for men, all classes of Catholics, down to the very poorest, and all ages, from married persons to little children preparing for their first Communion, can—at least in this part of England—secure the full advantages of a retreat with the greatest facility and at very moderate expense.''*

Admirers of René Bazin—and all Catholic readers ought to be among their ranks—will remember the chapter in his wonderful book *Le Blé qui lève*, which I am glad to see Father Plater condenses in his present volume. If the results, social as well as religious, produced by the workmen's retreats in Catholic Belgium are as yet far beyond anything we can aspire to in this country, still the progress which has been made in this direction during the past six years is certainly most gratifying. (I am, of course, referring to the retreats for men, and not to those for women and girls, which are of a quarter of a century's existence in our midst.) Father Plater's modesty does not allow him to state that the first public impulse given to the movement was the admirable paper read by himself at the Brighton Conference of the Catholic Truth Society as late as 1906. What has

* Preface to *The Retreat Handbook*, by Rev. H. Hohn, Washbourne, (a little penny book that will be found useful to beginners making Retreats.)

happened since is narrated by his own pen in the following pages. But I feel it to be a mere act of justice on my part, whilst expressing my appreciation of this book and my earnest desire that it may be widely read by both Catholics and non-Catholics, to record here how very greatly the whole movement is indebted to the author, both for its inception and its subsequent development, which he has never ceased to further by both pen and voice, by articles and by lectures. Yet, whatever share Father Plater and so many other devoted men and women have been privileged to have in this divine work, none will be more ready than they to protest: "I have planted, Apollo watered; but God gave the increase. . . . For we are God's coadjutors." (1 Cor. iii. 6, 9.)

Louis Charles, Bishop of Salford.

Low Sunday, 1912.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS little book does not profess to be a complete history of the modern retreat movement. It is largely made up of articles which have appeared in various newspapers and periodicals—The *Hibbert Journal*, the *Spectator*, the *Month*, the *Catholic Times*, the *Universe*—and are here reproduced with the kind permission of the respective editors. Naturally, such a congeries of articles, written at odd moments during several years, and without reference to each other, does not cover the whole ground. It no doubt presents a somewhat scrappy appearance, and contains a certain amount of repetition. But in default of any general history of the retreat movement, and of any prospect of being able to write one, I have ventured to publish this sketch.

My grateful thanks are due to the many friends in many lands who have helped me.

CHARLES PLATER, S.J.

OXFORD, *September*, 1911.

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RETREATS FOR THE PEOPLE

CHAPTER I

THE NEED OF RETREATS

Tout ce qui fournit à l'âme une dose de calme, fût-elle très petite, est toujours un service rendu à la raison.
—Gerbet.

A "dose of calm" is hard enough to come by in these days. We see restlessness everywhere —among the idle rich, in the professional classes, among working men. The mania for freakishness, increasingly prevalent among the wealthy, the shifty ingenuity with which expensive new sensations are discovered, and the rapidity with which they pall, take us back to decadent Rome, with its mad quest for luxuries, its instability of character, its childish whims. Father Bernard Vaughan's picture of a certain section of society is substantially the same as Juvenal's. Not all will be equally distressed at the sinfulness of the smart set; but everyone must deplore its utter inanity. In America matters would seem to be worse. Pace is the

one consideration among the very rich. Mr Upton Sinclair, in his novel, *The Metropolis*, has brought out the fatuity of it all:

"People attended these ceaseless rounds of entertainment simply because they dreaded to be left alone. They wandered from place to place, following like a herd of sheep whatever leader would inaugurate a new diversion. One could have filled a volume with the list of their "fads." There were new ones every week—if society did not invent them the yellow journals invented them."

New York and London are going back to the vulgarity of wealth, the brainless and spineless cult of extravagance which marked the decay of family life in Rome.

Mr Warde Fowler, in a characteristically charming paper read at a general meeting of the Classical Association, has pointed out the material changes in the Roman house which corresponded with the growing spirit of restlessness. The old *atrium*—the focus of domestic life, human and superhuman, the place where worship and work went on together, the "home" in the best sense of the word—lost its sanctity and privacy and was invaded by the street. Something very like our modern hotel life supplanted the close-knit family converse of earlier days. Palaces in the city and extensive villas in the country were run up, lavishly decorated, occupied for a brief season—and sold. And this instability in residence indicated

and fostered a serious instability of character. The old Roman *gravitas* gave way to restlessness, love of change, infirmity of purpose. To quote Mr Warde Fowler:

"For steady thought or persistent work, one must have an abiding-place. I would suggest that the want of the power of intellectual concentration, of deep and sustained thought, among the Romans, as well as the looseness of their family life in these later periods of their history, may be brought into connection with the history of the Roman house."

We cannot afford to make light of similar manifestations among ourselves. We cannot disregard them or brush them aside as private vagaries which affect only the actors themselves. These people are a disgrace to our race, and a permanent scandal to those among whom they live. The fashion spreads, and many who cannot afford to be freaks on a large scale will catch something of the aimless quest of unworthy sensations which prompts these exhibitions. That the men and women who possess great wealth and constant leisure should devote both to the pursuit of such inanities cannot fail to lower the tone of the whole social organism. Apart from the specific acts of injustice which they commit, these people foster bitter discontent among the honest working classes, and hamper the efforts at social reform which are being attempted amongst us. A "dose of calm"

might help some of these misguided people to realise the mess they are making of their own lives and the harm they are doing to others.

Among the professional classes (and we may include leaders of industry and commerce) the case is somewhat different. Their restlessness, though deplorable enough, is not so much the result of wanton childishness as of the conditions under which they live. Though serious it is not idiotic, and hence is more remediable. The late Professor William James has uttered a grave warning with regard to what he calls the " bottled-lightning " type of mind which is becoming so familiar. He denounces the over-excited, over-tense mental life which so many business men allow themselves to lead, with the result that " the sultry, threatening, exhausting, thunderous inner atmosphere never quite clears away." This, he says, indicates not strength but weakness. He recommends a deliberate attempt to cultivate that freedom of mind, that " power through repose," about the acquisition of which we shall have some practical suggestions to make in a moment. He pleads for simple-heartedness, for the relaxation of all unnecessary solicitudes and anxieties.

And, finally, among our working classes we see the same restlessness in yet other manifestations. Here again we note a parallel with Roman life in the first century B.C. We recall the growth of lodging-houses (*insulæ*) for the

poorer classes, the disappearance of the real home, with its round of domestic duties, its household gods, its store-house, its daily cooking. As with us, the cooking came to be done at the shop round the corner, the meal might be eaten anywhere, doles were multiplied, and sensational spectacles brought within the reach of all, to the detriment of the home. Street life and institution life took the place of home life. The *popina* and *tabernae* played the part of the modern public-house. To quote Mr Warde Fowler again:

"The life of the *insula* and the necessity, as well as the attraction of the out-of-door life, must have helped to weaken the fibre of the urban population. No doubt it made them sharper, as it does in our own towns, but it also made them restless, pleasure-loving, and so too reckless and revolutionary, useless for prompt political or military action. Augustus so clearly saw this, that he reluctantly but deliberately took the line of making this population comfortable in body and mind by simple petting, so that they might not make everyone else uncomfortable, as they had been wont to do."

Our own side of the equation may be seen in such works as Dr Arthur Shadwell's *Industrial Efficiency*, where we find ourselves described as "a nation at play."

"The once unequalled workman has adopted the motto, 'Get as much and do as little as possible.' His business is football or betting. . . . Work is

a nuisance, an evil necessity to be shirked or hurried over as quickly and as easily as possible. . . . Comfort is the greatest good, hard work is an evil, discipline a monstrous thing, suffering not to be thought of, and if duty entail these things, then away with it."

All this is, of course, fatal to home life, to steady effort, to strength of character, efficiency, spiritual insight, and real happiness. The craving for spectacular excitement, for variety, for sensual gratification, points to the same lack of calmness of which we have seen various manifestations in other classes of society. The tendency is seen in the literature dear to the working man. It is seen in the style of oratory which he most affects—the crude generalisations, the reckless denunciations, the spicy rationalism, and the tinsel Utopias. The last thing which may be expected of the popular orator is that instead of standing on his tub he will get inside it, like Diogenes, to think. Yet our working men can be eminently sensible and clear-headed when they like. All that they need is a dose of calm.

This restlessness, then, would seem to run through all the classes of society. It means, of course, an appalling national waste, a weakening of moral fibre, a forfeiture of solid happiness, and a general failure to recognise man's end in life.

The calm which we are advocating is not, we

may say at once, a mere "rest cure"—such temporary physical repose as may enable men to become restless again more furiously than ever. Nor is it mere reaction—of which we see plenty already. Outbursts of fashionable eccentricity, over-tense spells of business, and tumultuous Bank Holidays, all bring their revenge in the shape of listlessness or dull discontent. We are pleading not for a mere cessation of restlessness, but for a calmness which indicates quiet strength. This calmness is not lassitude; it implies a balance of the faculties, a measured activity. Aristotle, at the opening of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, describes the short-sighted hunter after happiness—the man who grasps at money, or pleasure, or social distinction. Such a one is restless because his aim is of its nature an unsatisfying one. He may have intervals of repose; but he is never calm. The calmness of which we speak belongs only to the man of insight and self-control—to the man for whom the world has meaning.

What we want is the calm of the Sister of Charity, busily putting things to rights in a fœtid slum, and looking all the while through the rags and the squalor at the Christ beneath. We want the calm of Blessed Thomas More, bantering his friends on the eve of his execution; or of Philip Neri, serene amid the whirl of a corrupt city; or of the Curé of Ars, tranquil throughout his thirty years' martyrdom of haras-

sing duties. We want the calm which looks the great realities of death and judgment in the face; the calm of Michael Angelo in his last years, when he saw his own life-work *sub specie aeternitatis*, and wrote:

Nè pinger nè scolpir fia più che queti
L'anima volta a quell' amor divino,
Ch' aperse a prender noi in croce le braccia.

We want not the stifling of uneasy questionings by means of distraction, but the calm which comes from vision; the calm described by Sir Frank Marzials in his fine sonnet, *Death Undisguised*:

Ah, Death, thou wildering Proteus, that dost wear
Such shifting shapes in human phantasies,
Fain would I see thy face without disguise,
And know thee as thou art for foul or fair.
Then Death appeared responsive to my prayer,
In his own aspect, grandly calm and wise,
With a strange light of knowledge in his eyes,
But kind and gracious, and he blessed me there.

And from that day, as friend would walk with friend,
We walk the world together he and I,
And oft he holds with me high colloquy,
So that the ways of life through which we wend,
Are lit with noble purpose, and the end
And final goal seems blent with the far sky.

Let it not be thought that to raise our eyes to "the end and final goal" will make us unpractical, will hamper our effective work in the world. The contrary is the case. We shall

be all the more efficient citizens of this world in proportion as we steep ourselves in the conviction that we have not here an abiding city. For though the material civilisation about us does not limit our horizon, it is nevertheless the symbol of the world beyond; and the reverent care with which the spiritual man tracks out the image of truth and goodness here, is a preparation and a probation for the sight of eternal truth and goodness. The material world will gain in significance and value for those who look beyond it. To the man who fixes his eyes on it, it is a vague and disconcerting blur.

How is this calm to be obtained? Obviously, it cannot be left to chance. The importunity of the distractions all about us is so insistent, that we must by a deliberate effort place ourselves for a few days, from time to time, beyond reach of their influence. This might seem to be impracticable for the average man; but it is not so. We are able to point to a method which has been tried with signal success on the Continent, and the introduction of which into this country allows hundreds of men to produce a profound modification of their lives by introducing into them just this needful element of calm.

But let us look at the matter from another point of view. The restlessness of which we have spoken has a social bearing. It not only makes social reform an impossible task, but it blinds even generous and intelligent social

workers to what is, after all, the fundamental social need of our time.

In England, for instance, the average social worker has come to have a certain pathetic faith in the efficacy of committees as instruments of social regeneration. When once he has grasped the purpose for which his committee exists, he is apt to resent any further inquiries as to how far this purpose is related to actual social needs. Give him a report which records a lavish distribution of blankets, or an unparalleled activity in the giving of lantern-lectures, or the capture of a football trophy by repentant hooligans, and he asks no more. Possibly the results thus secured may indicate some constructive work, and mark an advance towards the realisation of a carefully considered scheme. Possibly they may not. Where the vision is limited to a narrow field of practical work, it is easy to mistake the means for the end, and to develop a cheery optimism based on fallacious statistics.

Such philanthropic short-sightedness is not without its advantages. The sight of realities which lie deeper, of social conditions which threaten to nullify their work as inexorably as the incoming tide washes away the children's sand-castles, would probably discourage many workers from efforts which, however inadequate, are not without their value. Yet, on the other hand, some reflection upon the more fundamental needs of our time would give our

departmental workers an increased solidarity and a more assured direction. Their efforts would lose none of their value for being seen in perspective. In fact, one of the most serious weaknesses of much of our social work lies in its exclusive attention to the improvement of material surroundings. It is tacitly assumed that a corresponding improvement in character will be the necessary result—a result which may be left to take care of itself.

In this matter we may quote the opinion of Mr C. F. G. Masterman, who, while admitting the value of the efforts which are being made to meet specific social evils, has pleaded eloquently for a recognition of what is, after all, the deepest social need of our time:

"A background to life—some common bond uniting, despite the discordance of the competitive struggle—some worthy object of enthusiasm or devotion behind the aimless passage of the years—some spiritual force or ideal elevated over the shabby scene of temporary failure—this is the deep, imperative need of the masses in our great cities to-day. With this the mere discomforts incidental to changing conditions of life and the specific remediable social evils can be contemplated with equanimity; without it the drifting through time of the interminable multitude of the unimportant becomes a mere nightmare vision of a striving signifying nothing, 'doing and undoing without end.' No material comfort, increased intellectual alertness, or wider capacity of attainment, will

occupy the place of this one fundamental need. The only test of progress which is to be anything but a mere animal rejoicing over mere animal pleasure is the development and spread of some spiritual ideal which will raise into an atmosphere of effort and distinction the life of the ordinary man."—*The Heart of the Empire*, p. 30.

The inadequacy of so much of our social work lies in this, that not only does it touch merely the fringe of the classes in which it is interested, but it makes no deep impression upon the individual most accessible to its treatment. It tends to raise the standard of comfort rather than of character. It does not fortify men: it merely alters their surroundings. The change is applied from without, not educed from within. It reminds us of the gardeners in *Alice in Wonderland* who painted the white roses red. This was, no doubt, only a temporary expedient, resorted to under stress of panic. It could hardly have been based upon any deliberate horticultural theory. Even in Wonderland red roses must be grown and not painted.

This want of an ideal indicated by Mr Masterman is perhaps more sadly apparent among the workmen of this country than among those of the Continent. Our fiercer individualism makes less response, for instance, to the enthusiasms of a socialism which, however crude, does at least substitute class selfishness for individual self-seeking. It is clear that an

ideal which is to win popular acceptance amongst us and lift us out of the rut of materialism must be something very potent, very rousing, and very simple. No æsthetic propagandism, no prospect of remote benefits to posterity will suffice. Our appeal must be to the whole man. It must be practical without being sordid, reasonable yet not academic, and emotional without hysterics. Our ideal must be high enough to co-ordinate all the activities of life and to satisfy the spiritual nature, yet so practical that it can maintain itself in an environment to which every other ideal would succumb —and not only maintain itself, but serve as a stimulus and a guide to constructive social work. We have, in fact, to discover an ideal which will illuminate the mind and strengthen the will of the ordinary man in the ordinary street, and we have to do this at a time when the national character is showing deplorable signs of deterioration. We have to seek primarily for some method of developing virility and strength of character, steadiness of purpose and consciousness of individual responsibility. Until we have secured this, our material will crumble to pieces at our touch. To raise the standard of comfort is only to precipitate the collapse. Legislation can do little in the absence of moral stamina among a people. Thus the drink evil, to take but one instance, cannot be remedied merely by restrictive measures,

though these undoubtedly have their value. We must give men an effective motive for not evading the law. This is obviously no easy task.

And having found our ideal we must devise some method of making it dominate the lives of prosaic people. When it is a question of penetrating the working classes, the ordinary channels of social and religious activity will not suffice. Modern industrial conditions have isolated the workers, so that they now live and think apart from the rest of the community. Their relation to their employers rests on a cash basis, not, as formerly, on the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. They have their own standards and their own ways of looking at things. The bulk of them will not avail themselves of the best-intentioned efforts to reach them. They regard the churches as institutions intended for the Sunday recreation of a certain section of the well-dressed. Religion does not claim their attention, or present itself as "good tidings." They will not accept the spiritual ministrations of those who, they feel, are out of sympathy with them.* Of course there are exceptions. They will listen to men like Father Dolling, and they may respond, to some extent, to the work of a

* These paragraphs, reproduced from an article in the *Hibbert Journal*, have general reference to the working classes. They are less applicable to Catholic workmen.

Settlement. But is there any likelihood that the Settlement movement will develop on a scale sufficient to affect more than an infinitesimal proportion of the working classes? And even here the want of a definite ideal sometimes leads to that worship of visible results of which we have spoken. As for institutions embodying purely secular ideals—ethical societies, courses of lectures on art, and the like—it will be clear to those who know the deepest needs of our working classes that these can never serve as an ultimate goal of human endeavour, or produce, by themselves, any degree of virility.

Hence direct action upon working men as a body is difficult. The only possible method is to reach them through members of their own class. If we can form a nucleus of working men who feel that they have a message for their brethren, and will spare no pains and shirk no obloquy in delivering it, our problem will be solved. If only a small body of influential working men could be selected, brought away from their normal surroundings, and invited to meet together for a few days in a comfortable country house, then, provided they could be won to enthusiasm for a great ideal, they would form an élite which would diffuse that ideal among others. Repeat the performance every week near several of the great centres of industry, and the whole tone of the working classes in the country will be raised.

The suggestion may sound quixotic. But it has actually been tried on a very large scale within the last few years, and has succeeded beyond the expectations of its most sanguine promoters. To give some account of this work is the purpose of the present book.

What has been said thus far about the need for retreats is not likely to encounter violent dissent from anyone who will take the trouble to think. All, irrespective of creed, must deplore the present waste of human power. The Pagan philosopher and the Hindu will support our plea for a "dose of calm," and will protest against the fevered rush of modern life. Serious social workers will admit the necessity for raising the standard of character and of cultivating, by means of action upon an élite, such an ideal as has been described.

But now let us come to particulars and ask where such an ideal may be found.

No convinced Christian can doubt what the answer should be. Christ has furnished it. No philosophy save His can at once train and satisfy the human heart. From Him we get more than mere example: we get grace. Our "dose of calm" must be taken in His presence if it is to influence our lives. Speculation becomes barren unless He inspires it. Solitude becomes selfish isolation unless He companions it. To withdraw from the noise of life will be to encounter a disquieting silence unless His voice is heard.

A retreat which is not converse with Him is but a frightening glimpse into a dark abyss.

Later on it will be seen how Christians who differ widely in their beliefs agree as to the need of seeking Christ in an occasional retreat—of withdrawing with Him from the world's pandemonium for prayer and quiet thought. But now we may consider the Catholic view of the matter.

First as regards the purely spiritual aspect of retreats—their power to bring a man close to God, to reshape his life, to flood him with grace.

It may be said that retreats are a positive necessity of modern life. Catholics have to live in an atmosphere tainted by worldliness, heresy and irreligion. The professions are soaked with these things. Commerce is coloured by them. The working classes have been severed by force of circumstances from those opportunities of continual contact with the Church which were offered to the workman in former days. Economic insecurity, the snapping of the old religious and social ties, class friction, the hustle of competition, the growth of materialism, the deluge of secularist literature—all these have produced the religious apathy and indifference which might have been expected. Our leakage is heart-breaking—but not surprising. Everything tends to draw men away from those high standards which the Church puts before them. In these days a man will scarcely remain a staunch Catholic unless he has an enthusiasm

for the Church which is proof against manifold seduction. Retreats are necessary because they foster such enthusiasm as nothing else can.

That retreats do have this effect will appear from what follows. The explanation is quite simple. Retreats furnish just that intimate and continuous appeal which is normally required for a great spiritual change. The man who makes a retreat gets clean away from his normal atmosphere. His efforts at prayer, his glimpses of God, his searchings of soul are not sandwiched in between workaday occupations. They are not distracted by the clamour of the street. The impression has time to sink in. Every action of the day, every sight that meets his eye, every sound that falls upon his ear contributes towards the one result. It is all part of a plan.

Some may ask why retreats for the laity are necessary. Are not the old practices sufficient? Why introduce novel methods?

The answer has been well put by a writer in the *Canadian Messenger*:*

"No doubt the means already in vogue are sufficient, if they are rightly applied, and profited by to the full. But here is just the difficulty. The weakness of poor human nature is such that even the most potent remedies gradually lose their efficacy and fail of their effect. We quickly lose the spirit and fall into routine. Even the holiest states, the sacerdotal and the religious, are not

* August, 1910.

immune from this weakness, but need an occasional awakening. Now if the means of grace so liberally scattered along the path of the priest or the religious, if the daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice, the recitation of the breviary, and the continual dealing in holy things; if daily Mass and Communion, and meditation, and frequent spiritual readings, and multiplied prayers, and examinations of conscience, and exhortations, are found so insufficient for men and women cut off from the world and living in an atmosphere of the supernatural, that a yearly retreat of a week is prescribed by bishops and by every religious rule, who will say that the man-in-the-street who lacks all, or almost all, these aids to salvation, who is flung into the midst of temptation and thrown into daily contact with sin, stands in no need of an occasional spiritual rousing, and should not be given the opportunity of making a bare three days' retreat?

" ' Let the layman be satisfied with the ordinary means, forsooth!' Abolish retreats of religious and clergy, and you will have the condition of things such as it was before the Council of Trent. ' Let him be satisfied with the means of grace that sanctified his fathers before him!' Yes, on condition that you roll back the world's history and place him in the same circumstances in which his fathers lived."

" But," it may be asked, " cannot the good results of a retreat be equally well secured by means of a parochial mission? A mission is much less expensive and is within the reach of all."

The answer to this question has already been suggested. But as the matter is important it may be worth while to dwell on it further.

St Alphonsus Ligouri, in his letter on retreats, writes as follows:

"The sermons given in churches are excellent things, but if those who have the happiness to hear them do not apply themselves to reflect on what they have heard, they get little profit from them. Reflection is the mother of holy resolutions, and this reflection can never be properly made except in solitude."

Catholic bishops have frequently spoken to the same effect. It will suffice to quote some words of the Archbishop of New York:

"The mission is not a retreat. A mission is filled with many distractions, and its work is scattered. The truths men hear in a mission are not so deeply etched on their souls as if they were entirely secluded. In a retreat you are free from distractions; you have every advantage for the concentration of your faculties; you have a whole series of instructions and exercises knitted together in logical sequence; you are made to think and to judge things at their true value." *

Hence it is clear that the retreat produces an effect which cannot be secured by a mission. The mission is addressed to indiscriminate masses of the faithful, the retreat to a select few.

* Quoted in the *American Messenger*, August, 1910.

The mission is designed to convert, the retreat to form an apostolate. The mission makes men Christians, the retreat makes them standard-bearers of the Christian faith. The mission leads them to the Church, the retreat introduces them into the sanctuary. The actual spiritual revolution produced by a mission is not likely to be so profound or so lasting as that effected by a retreat. Missions, of course, have been, and are, a great power for good. But they cannot do the work of a retreat. They may rescue backsliders and raise the general level of piety in a parish. But they will scarcely train a band of apostles united in a definite aim and instructed for a precise purpose.

Apostles! That is what we need:

"An élite alone can save us. To form a nucleus of Christians tempered to resist the assaults of the foe, impregnated with the apostolic spirit, ready to waive their personal interests, to penetrate the masses, to strengthen the faith that totters, to rally the scattered men of good will—that is the pressing task. It is on foot. It is being accomplished quietly but surely—by means of retreats." *

Nor is the Catholic blind to the social value of the retreat, for he knows how closely social questions are connected with religious. Moreover our social duties have been assigned to us by God, and the Catholic faith which gives us

* "*Rallions-nous*" by Joseph P. Archambault, S.J.

the highest motives for promoting social reform, gives us also the principles upon which alone it can securely be conducted. More than this, it impresses upon men the qualities without which such reform is impossible.

The extraordinary social influence of these retreats will be described in a later chapter. It will be seen to justify the statement made by the Bishop of Bruges to the effect that the work of retreats "deservedly occupies the first place among social works."

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN OF POPULAR RETREATS

RETREATS, in the wider sense of the term, are as old as mankind. To pass whole days in solitude, prayer and penance has been the practice of God's friends in all ages. The Old Testament affords numerous instances. In the New we have Christ's forty days in the desert—an example imitated by holy men from the early days of the Church.

Christian treatises on the advantages of such spells of prayerful recollection have been abundant, and there is no need to dilate on the arguments which they contain or the illustrations they employ. They form a whole department of ascetical literature: they deal with what is a commonplace of Christianity. By way of specimen a few paragraphs may be quoted from the letter of St Alphonsus Ligouri to a young man who was deliberating about the choice of a state of life:*

* An English translation has been published by Sands & Co., entitled *On Retreats*. Price twopence.

" Our Lord one day said to St Teresa :—

" ' There are many souls to which I earnestly desire to speak, but the world makes so much noise in their hearts that My voice cannot be heard. Ah, if they would only withdraw a little from the world.'

" Thus, my dear friend, God wishes to speak to you, but He wishes to speak to you alone in retreat, for if He spoke to you in the midst of your family, your relations and friends and daily occupations would continue to make such a noise in your heart, that you would not hearken to His voice.

" This is why the saints left their homes and their country, and retired into some cave, or into the desert, or to the cell of some religious house, in order there to find God, and listen to His voice. St Eucherius relates (Epist. ad Hilarion) that a person wishing to know where he could find God, went to consult some master of the spiritual life and he leading this person into a solitary spot, said to him, ' Here you will find God,' adding nothing more. Thus he made him understand that God is not in the midst of the noise of the world, but in solitude. St Bernard (Epistle cvi.) says that he learned to know God better amongst the beeches and oaks than in all the books he had ever studied. Worldly people love to find themselves in the society of their friends, with whom they can talk freely and amuse themselves; but the wish of the saints is to live in solitary places, in the midst of woods or in caverns, in order to converse with God alone, Who in solitude communicates Himself to souls and speaks familiarly to them as a friend to a friend. As St Jerome puts it, ' O solitudo in qua

Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur ac conversatur.' Father Vincent Caraffa used to say that there was only one thing that he desired on earth, and that was a small cave with a piece of bread and a pious book, to live there, always removed from men and have no converse but with God.

" . . . Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who had no need of silence to be collected in God, for the sake of example, however, frequently withdrew Himself from the society of men and went into the mountains or the desert to pray (Matt. xiv. 23; Luke v. 16).

" He also wished His disciples to retire into some solitary spot after their apostolic labours in order to enjoy repose of mind: ' Venite seorsum in desertum locum et requiescite pusillum ' (Mark vi. 31). He wished to teach us by this that, even though our occupations be spiritual, when we have dealings with men the mind cannot help falling into a certain slackness: hence the necessity of repairing its strength by retreat."

It was inevitable that a practice which had the effect of deepening the Christian spirit in so marked a degree should, as time went on, become a matter of custom and rule at least for the clergy.

The first active religious order in which retreats were enjoined by rule was the Society of Jesus. A retreat of thirty days was required of the candidate for admission, and later on was introduced the practice of making another retreat of thirty days during the third year of

probation. Finally, in 1608, came the decree of the VIth General Congregation enjoining an annual eight days' retreat—a practice which had, as a matter of fact, been usual from the first. Two years earlier Paul V. had already encouraged members of other religious orders to make annual retreats.*

That the Jesuits should have laid so much stress upon retreats in the religious formation of their members is not surprising. It was the system of retreats drawn up by St Ignatius of Loyola that had shaped his followers and given its peculiar character to all their work. In their schools and missions, in their sermons and lectures, in the books they wrote and the lives they led one may trace the persistent influence of the founder's drill-book. St Ignatius himself, in spite of a characteristic disinclination to reveal the special favours shown him by God (he destroyed the records of his visions) used to commend his retreat method with an enthusiasm which would surprise us in any but a saint. But the enthusiasm was detached and, so to say, impersonal. As a matter of fact, he was convinced that God had guided him in the composition of the *Exercises*—used him as an instrument to a degree which made self-con-

* See No. 6 of the excellent series of pamphlets, entitled *Collection de la Bibliothèque des Exercices de Saint Ignace*, referred to in future as C.B.E., and described in Chapter xiv.

gratulation an impertinence. To a priest at Alcalà he wrote:

"I have begged you to make a retreat (follow the *Exercises*) for a month under the direction of one whom I have appointed. If you have not already done so, I beg you for the love and honour of God, I beseech you by the cruel death which He has suffered for us, do so, throw yourself wholly into them. Then, if you repent having done so, look upon me as a knave or a fool. But I come back to my request again and again, and I conjure you as often as I can, in the interests of the service of God our Saviour, to do that which I conceive to be the best thing in this world, both for your own spiritual advancement and also to enable a great number of souls to walk in the way of salvation."

St Ignatius, then, does not hesitate to commend his new method. Yet we must remember that if the method was new the matter was not: and this consideration may help to explain the readiness of the Saint and his followers to eulogise the book. Grave doctors could commend the *Exercises* in language which might fitly be used in appraising the Bible, for the simple reason that the *Exercises* are, as it has been said, but an application of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

Into the vexed question of the other literary sources of the *Exercises* we need not enter. Battles have raged round the book, historical battles as well as theological. How far was Ignatius indebted to the *Ejercitatorio* of Cis-

neros, to the *Imitation of Christ*, to Ludolph of Saxony's *Life of Christ*? The discussion is minute and curious, but has not much bearing on our present purpose. The important fact for us is the use which St Ignatius was led to make of what was the common heritage of Catholics. *Non nova sed nove.* He took the traditional asceticism of the Catholic Church and arranged it into a course of soul-drill. The order is logical, and above all psychological. We are given not random meditations on the great truths, but a most skilfully ordered appeal to the whole man, head and heart alike. A rough outline of the course followed may be taken from a description of a retreat written for the *Hibbert Journal*.*

"Vague sentimentalism—a mere emotional 'revival' with its inevitable reaction—forms no part of the process. Neither, on the other hand, are the 'points' abstract or academic. In orderly course the men are led onward, not by hysterical rhetoric, but by calm and earnest statement of fact, to see the meaning of their lives. Man, they are led to reflect, has been created by God to render praise, reverence, and service to His Maker. All other things exist in order to help him to fulfil that purpose aright. Here at once is a standard by which he may judge everything he employs—money, opportunities, friends, health, life itself. Here is a basis for (among other things) his social duties. All his aspirations after material well-being fall

* October, 1908.

into their place; all that is good in them is developed and justified; all that is crude or exaggerated is refined away. The malice of sin and the necessity for its punishment are explained. Each one makes a careful survey of his past life in the light of the great principle just obtained. And, lest the soul should lose courage, it is told of the Fatherly mercy of God, as displayed, perhaps, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, or the story of the woman who was a sinner. Then the meaning of the Redemption is explained. Appeal is made to the generosity of each. He is Christ's soldier, and a great battle is raging, though he guessed it not, between the powers of light and those of darkness. The scene of it is his own factory, his own club, his own home. On which side will he range himself? Before God he makes his choice. The life of Christ is passed in review and made the pattern on which each is to mould his own life in future. The story of the Passion leaves its mark. Then, strengthened and tranquillised, the men come to see how the love of God is the force which raises man above himself, ennobles his life, and gives him eternal happiness. To all this an assent is given, which is real, and not, as Cardinal Newman puts it, 'notional.' It forms the starting-point of a new life."

For fuller synopses the student will turn to Suarez or Bartoli. But outlines of this kind are not very illuminating to those who have never made a retreat. Indeed the first perusal of the book of the *Exercises* itself may prove disappointing. It has to be lived rather than read,

Moreover it was written for those who give retreats rather than for those who propose to make them; and to give the *Exercises* with profit supposes some familiarity with a tradition which is partly contained in the official *Directory* and partly handed on as a method from the days of St Ignatius. As for the apparatus of annotations, additions, preludes, examens, methods of election, rules and the rest, to be found in the text of the *Exercises*, though bewildering to the casual reader, they fall naturally into place in an actual retreat conducted by a skilled director.*

The power of the *Exercises* is seen in the effects which they produced from the first. To them was largely due the counter-Reformation. As Père Debuchy, following Janssen, has pointed out,† the defections from the Church among German Catholics were due not so much to the novel doctrines as to the scandalous conduct of clergy and nobility. Intellectual err rs sprang up quickly in the rank soil of corrupt morals. Here, as elsewhere, it was the aim of Ignatius to restore primitive doctrine by restoring primitive prayer, penance, self-examination and self-conquest. Blessed Peter Faber in his

* For the important part which direction holds in the *Exercises* see Appendix A. An admirable account of the *Exercises* is found in a little booklet by Father Joseph Rickaby, S.J.. entitled *How I made my Retreat*, and published by the Catholic Truth Society, price threepence.

† C.B.E., No. 6, pp. 60-61.

Memoriale describes the results effected in Spain, Italy and Germany, including the restoration to their first fervour of hundreds of convents.*

Everywhere we find the *Exercises* leading men to action and rousing to a crusade. Laynez and Salmeron employ them to put heart into a dispirited generation. It was to be the same with the missionaries sent to far countries. Martyrs fortified themselves by a retreat. The *Exercises* prepared men to die for God or—a more difficult task it might be—to live for Him.

"The results of the retreats soon became palpable in the colleges that everywhere sprang up for the preservation of Catholic youth endangered by the heretical teaching; in the restored and refilled churches; in the innumerable sodalities and associations founded for the furthering of every Catholic and charitable purpose; in the correction of inveterate public abuses. In a word, Catholic life shook off its lethargy, and the renewal of spirit found outlets through numberless channels long sealed-up, for an outpouring of energy that should regenerate the world." †

It is not implied that the *Exercises* of St Ignatius form the only method of making a profitable retreat. But they are a method—

* For the early effects of the *Exercises* see Diertins' *Historia Exercitiorum*, the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists (July 31), and the works of Rossignoli and Nigronius.

† Rev. W. H. Hingston, in the *Canadian Messenger*, May, 1910.

proved and approved—and method of some sort cannot be dispensed with. A random spiritual reverie is scarcely a retreat.*

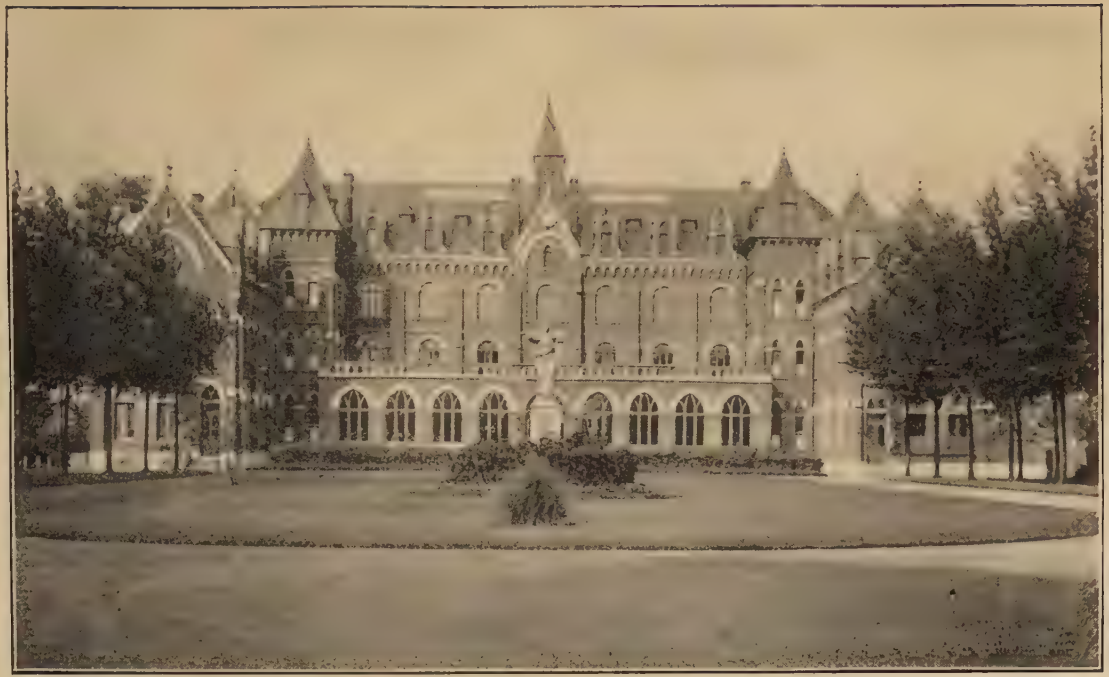
Towards the end of the sixteenth century the practice of making annual retreats began to spread in the Italian seminaries. St Charles Borromeo (who himself made a retreat twice a year) obliged all candidates for sacred orders in his diocese to perform the *Exercises*. The same rule was extended to the suffragan dioceses in 1576 and received the approval of Pius V. Ten years later retreats were made obligatory in the pontifical seminaries by a brief of Sixtus V.

At Naples early in the seventeenth century, Father Pavone was organising retreats for groups of clergy and laity. He even contemplated building a special retreat-house for Bishops. Other centres were formed, particularly by the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin, henceforth to be prominently associated with the work in many countries.

The part played by St Vincent de Paul in promoting retreats deserves special mention.

A curé of Normandy, Charles Godefroy, writes a little book entitled *Le College des*

* That this book should be mainly concerned with the Ignatian *Exercises* and with the retreat-houses conducted by the Society of Jesus was perhaps inevitable. Documents dealing with these subjects were more accessible to the writer than descriptions of other methods or accounts of the many retreat-houses so ably conducted by other religious Orders. Yet references to the latter have been made whenever possible.



MOUVAUX (See p. 55).

[*To face p.* 32.

Saincts Exercices and presents it in 1625 to the Bishops of France, who chance to be assembled at Paris. "These Exercises," he says in effect, "have done the regular clergy a world of good. Why not institute them everywhere for the secular clergy as well?" The Bishops approve, and pass a resolution. But no further steps are taken for the present.

Three years later we find the Bishop of Beauvais (who had helped to pass the resolution) lamenting to "Monsieur Vincent" that something must really be done to prepare candidates for ordination. They must make retreats.

"O, Monsieur!" cried the Saint. "This would be an excellent means of setting in order by degrees all the clergy of your diocese."

Monsieur Vincent drew up a plan of retreats and gave some of the conferences himself. The success was such that in 1631 the Archbishop of Paris established ordination retreats in his diocese. They were given six times a year under the direction of Monsieur Vincent. Clerics came to them from other dioceses. Finally Saint Lazare was acquired and retreats were given to laity as well as clergy. Men of all classes flocked thither—nobles, magistrates, scholars, artisans, peasants. Vincent compared the house to Noah's ark—partly no doubt on account of its miscellaneous tenants.

One day some men came to Saint Lazare for a retreat and found the house already full. St

Vincent would not let them be sent away. "Give them my room," he said. "Let it not be said that so great a grace was denied to anyone for want of room." That grace was given to twenty thousand men at Saint Lazare in St Vincent's time.

The example set by their patron saint has never been forgotten by the Brothers of St Vincent de Paul. We shall have further occasion to notice their zeal in attending and organising retreats.

Retreats for ordination candidates soon became general. M. de Bérulle had even preceded St Vincent de Paul in establishing them (1627) and M. Claude de la Croix and M. Olier took them up with enthusiasm. By degrees the various synods made them a matter of rule.

One of the most striking pages in the early history of these retreats is the story of their development in Brittany. In 1663 a house of retreats for men was founded at Vannes by M. de Kerlivio, the Vicar-General, and Father Huby, S.J. A fascinating description of this house is contained in a long letter written in 1682 by Father Honoré Chaurand,* a social apostle of prodigious activity, who built twenty-six hospices, and whose enthusiasm for the *Exercises* is another testimony to the social value of retreats.

Two thousand men, says Father Chaurand,

*C.B.E., No. 2.

come to Vannes each year. Notices of the retreats are sent to all the parishes and posted up in the churches. The dates are also marked in the diocesan *Ordo*.* The clergy issue reminders from the pulpits. Those who have made retreats bring others the following year. Wives persuade their husbands to attend the *Exercises*, mothers their sons, confessors their penitents.

All classes of men come to these retreats, says Father Chaurand, and their unanimity is gratifying and remarkable: †

* This practice has lasted to our own day. Retreats in Brittany have rightly been regarded, not as a rare spiritual luxury, but as a normal part of parish life—an institution accessible to the people.

† "Et quoy qu'il semble qu'un Gentilhomme ou un Magistrat doive se rebuter d'être mêlé avec des Païsans, et les Abbez avec des jeunes Echoliers néanmoins ils avoüent eux-memes que cette multitude et la variété des personnes leur donne de la devotion. C'est ce que j'ay remarqué en la derniere bande, où je voyois en même temps fondre en larmes des Curez, des Magistrats, des Gentils-hommes, des Bourgeois, des Marchands, des Artisans, des Laboureurs, des Vieillards de septante à huitante ans, et des Echoliers et d'autres jeunes garçons de boutique âgez de quinze a seize années." Particularly interesting are the accounts of the touching and simple little devotions and pious practices which are introduced into these retreats; as, for instance, the processions, the distribution of crucifixes, the use made of pictures, etc. The same letter tells us how at Quimper, after the meditation on the Prodigal Son, the priest who was giving the *Exercises* would take the Monstrance and turn towards the men, who came by turns to kneel before it in the character of the Prodigal Son. Each one received a blessing and a few touching words.

Father Chaurand also tells us of the immense scale on which the *Exercises* were at that time being given in lower Brittany by Father Maunoir. This great-hearted missioner, now seventy-five years old, spent forty-five years at the work. He would give the *Exercises* for eight days to five hundred men at once—to fifteen hundred in the course of a month. There was no question of accommodating all these at any retreat-house: they had to camp out or find lodgings. They brought their own food with them. Discipline was perfect and silence absolute. Father Maunoir trained two hundred priests to aid him in the work, forty or fifty of whom would be on duty at each retreat, instructing or hearing confessions.

The example of Vannes was soon followed elsewhere. Father Houdry, writing a quarter of a century later, says that the retreats are in vogue in almost all the towns of France. A retreat-house was founded at Paris in 1682 by Father Le Valois, aided by Louis XIV. Nor was the need of retreat-houses for women overlooked, as will be seen in a later chapter. But we must return to Brittany.

Father Jean Jégou, who died in 1701 at the age of eighty-five, founded a retreat-house at Quimper. He started the work absolutely without resources, but Father Maunoir encouraged him and assured him that once a start were made the question of resources would

solve itself. So it came to pass. As soon as it was known that Father Jégou was going to build a retreat-house for all classes of people, contributions poured in—contributions in money and in kind. Some brought wood, others stone, others furniture. The women were no less generous than the men. "We are working," they said, "for the souls of our husbands and brothers and sons: and perhaps some day you will build a retreat-house for us too." Soon after the house was opened, the retreat-makers numbered fifteen hundred a year. Then Father Jégou was moved to Rennes—where he built another retreat-house.

Popular retreats in Brittany have continued till our own day under the direction of the parish clergy. In 1894 we read of a group of 250 fisherman making a retreat of five days: in 1895 of 4000 conscripts making retreats in the various houses of Brittany. No wonder that "the faith of a Breton peasant" is praised in all the churches.

In Italy the retreats found much favour in the eighteenth century. We hear of a hundred and fifty young man in retreat at Bologna in 1701 during the carnival. They were followed in Lent by eighty ecclesiastics, who, in turn, gave place during Passion Week to seventy gentlemen and ninety ladies. At Brescia, in the following year, hundreds of people are recorded as having made retreats. Elsewhere we again

find retreats for the various classes. Even the prisoners are not forgotten.

From distant missions come letters describing the effects of the *Exercises* on the non-European mind. In 1712 we hear that the neophytes in China have taken to them with enthusiasm. An interesting series of letters * from Madura, dating from 1719, tells of the marvellous results wrought there by the introduction of retreats. Father Bertoldi, who had already written a book on the *Exercises* in Tamil, gave a series of retreats to groups of neophytes with remarkable success.

Mention has been made of the importance attached to retreats by St Alphonsus de Ligouri. Alphonsus, as a youth, had, like many a Catholic schoolboy in our times, been accustomed to make an annual retreat, a practice to which he had been introduced by his father, a bluff soldier, who was in the habit of retiring into a religious house when Passiontide came round, to go through the drill of a soldier saint. These retreats did much for the boy; but they were to do more. When Alphonsus was twenty-six he made a retreat which stirred his soul to its depths and determined him to surrender all to God.

Small wonder that the Saint should lay particular stress upon the work of retreats when founding his congregation, and that the rule

* C.B.E., No. 25.

should especially mention the giving of retreats in Redemptorist houses. He himself directed them for clergy and laity, and in 1736 we find him borrowing a château for the purpose. More permanent provision was soon made at Ciorani. We have a picture of St Alphonsus himself directing a retreat there twenty years later. The place is packed, and intending retreat-makers continue to arrive. Messengers have to be sent in all directions to tell the priests and laymen who are making for the house that there is no more room. No matter, they will sleep in the porch. The Baron de Ciorani puts some of them up; others camp out in the galleries. One can dispense with comforts when St Alphonsus is giving a retreat.

Other Redemptorist houses rivalled Ciorani in zeal. To Deliceto came Bishops with their clergy and laymen without number. The house at Deliceto will be for ever linked with the name of St Gerard Majella, who threw himself with ardour into the work of promoting retreats there. He was indefatigable in enlisting recruits, and having secured them, he led them to God with the power and tact of a Saint.*

By the middle of the eighteenth century what may be called collegiate retreats found general favour. The Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin gave a great impetus to the movement. At Rome the members of the *Prima Primaria* went

* C.B.E., No. 10.

through the Spiritual Exercises every year. So did the Sodalists of the Immaculate Conception, who were for the most part clerics. At Naples, Milan, Genoa, Turin, Parma, Bologna, Brescia and elsewhere we find retreats established. Nor was the custom confined to Italy. It existed in the schools and colleges of France, Germany, Austria and other lands.

The Jesuits were by no means alone in the organisation of retreats. Capuchins, Lazarists, Eudists, Oratorians and others were taking part in the work. The secular clergy were, as we have seen, busy in Brittany. In Franche-Comté the Ven. Antony Reçeveur instituted the *Congrégation de la Retraite chrétienne* to give the *Exercises* to men and women. In Italy the Ven. Bruno Lanteri established a society of priests, the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, for the same purpose.

The history of popular retreats is full of romantic episodes, of enterprises which seemed quixotic until they turned out to be providential, of wild undertakings carried out and extravagant dreams that came true. Nearly all successful retreat-houses have started with the odds against them; they have been born amidst a chorus of discouragement and christened with plentiful showers of cold water; they have been sustained in their early struggles by obstinate people with no money but terrific confidence. One of the most picturesque instances of all this is the story

of Maria Antonia de la Paz, of which the outline only can be given here.

This astonishing woman was born in 1730, at Santiago del Estero in the Argentine Republic. At the age of fifteen she renounced the world and lived a life of extreme solitude and penance for twenty years. Then came the conviction that to establish popular retreats would be the best way of restoring religion in the country. So Maria Antonia sallied forth from her solitude, dressed in a strange costume and bearing a kind of pastoral staff, to tramp over half a continent and preach a crusade in favour of popular retreats. The task seemed sufficiently hopeless: there were no houses for the purpose and no means of providing them. People were apathetic and even hostile. Yet this valiant lady kept up her crusade for a quarter of a century.

Could anything come of such a wild notion? Well, Maria Antonia herself provided retreats for 100,000 people; and after her death the work was carried on by a number of her disciples who were later on formed into a religious community. In 1899, the centenary of her death, a great retreat-house was built on the site of her first foundation.

So her work is still flourishing, and it may be of interest to recall a few details about its beginnings.

Are we to picture Maria Antonia as a terribly

domineering person who bullied the rich into giving her money and worried the Bishops into giving her authorisation and interfered with the priests who gave the retreats? By no means. She never worried herself or other people about money; it came in abundance whenever it was wanted. As for the Bishops, they soon discovered her worth and contended with each other for her presence in their respective dioceses. Nor did she interfere in the working of the retreats. She provided the resources, acted as housekeeper and cook, and supported the work by her incessant prayers and astounding mortifications.

After establishing a house at Santiago del Estero she resumed her staff and set off, barefooted, and accompanied by one or two Indian women, to found more retreat-houses. The little band was regarded with astonishment, and even dismay. But the courage of Antonia was never damped. Everywhere she interviewed the ecclesiastical authorities, found a house, procured funds and set the retreats going. Her journeys, without provisions and in the teeth of dangers, read like a romance.

We possess several charming letters of Maria Antonia written to the Jesuits who had been exiled from Argentina.*

"At Cordoba" (she writes), "in the house that used to be yours, we have had fourteen retreats,

*C.B.E., No. 21.

each attended by from 200 to 300 people; and all this, by the singular mercy of God, without the least difficulty as regards accommodation, food, or anything else. It has all been done with the alms which have been spontaneously offered to me."

She declares that she has never taken a step without first ascertaining that it was God's will: "But He seems to lead me by the hand without my being able to understand or explain how it happens." She describes how she has been miraculously cured on several occasions. To her former confessor she sends a message which is touching in its humility:

"Tell him that I am now only a poor old woman, good for nothing and more wicked than ever."

In 1779 this indomitable "old woman" decided to go to Buenos Ayres. Here she found formidable obstacles. The Bishop was unfavourable and the people apathetic. But the personality of the woman broke down all hesitation or opposition. In the end the Bishop became enthusiastic and the people took fire. A retreat-house was fitted up for a hundred people. At the third retreat it was inconveniently crowded. The *Exercises* were given to groups of women as well as to men, and the great ladies of the town came to make retreats with their poorer sisters to their own great profit and pleasure.

Three years later nearly all the inhabitants of Buenos Ayres had made retreats. By this time the Bishop's enthusiasm knew no bounds. He frequently visited the house and (the detail is supplied by Maria Antonia herself, who, we must remember, helped in the kitchen) sampled the food, which he pronounced to be excellent. Thirty-four retreats had been given in fifteen months, each attended by over two hundred people and lasting for ten days. The Viceroy of Peru and nearly all the clergy were among the retreat-makers. By 1784 thirty thousand people had made retreats in Buenos Ayres alone. But figures mean little. The important thing to notice is that the whole character of the people had changed. Maria Antonia next visited Montevideo, where she organised retreats for five hundred people at a time. In 1799 she ended her long work, now in truth "an old woman." Her path through life had been marked by unflagging zeal and a strong common sense. It was also, we are told, brightened by miracles.

Passing on to the early nineteenth century we find, besides the now well-established clergy retreats, a certain number of houses for the laity. Mention must be made of the house of Ponterotto in Rome, associated as it is with so many great names.

This house was founded by a priest named Joachim Michelini, a man of extraordinary zeal,

who, about the year 1805, set himself to prepare the young people of Rome for their first Communion. The times were bad: the Napoleonic invasion had thrown all into confusion, and religious instruction was at a low ebb. The only remedy seemed to be the establishment of a regular house of retreats for those who were preparing to make their first Cummunion.

Father Michelini secured a tumbledown palace, which was being used as a granary, and set to work to beg unblushingly. Humiliations came thick and fast—and finally approbation and support. The founder did not live to see the development of his work; but the special providence which seems given to retreat-houses did not fail. The house found directors and friends among the saintliest men of that day. Cardinal Odescalchi, the Ven. Vincent Pallotti, and the Ven. Gaspar del Bufalo took charge of it in turn. Cardinal Mezzofanti and several of his colleagues would help to serve at table. In the register of the retreats about 1826, we often read that the *Exercises* were given by Canon Giovanni Maria Mastai, who, later on, as Pope Pius IX. was often to visit the house and give Communion.*

In Rome, too, retreats for Pontifical soldiers were started by Mgr. Piatti in 1819. Elsewhere congregations were founded to promote retreats for the laity—the Congregation of Marie Repa-

*C.B.E., No. 17.

ratrice and, in 1832, the Congregation of the Cenacle at Louvesc.*

These examples are perhaps enough to show that the work of retreats for the laity was never wholly discontinued, though it cannot be said to have flourished during the first half of the nineteenth century. The suppression of the Society of Jesus had dealt a heavy blow at the popular giving of the *Exercises*. In 1834 Father Roothaan, the General of the Society, urged the restored Order to take up with the old enthusiasm the instrument which had proved so effective in the past; but it was some time before this could be done on any large scale. The second spring of the retreat movement was not to appear for another forty years or so.

Yet there were indications of what was to come, and with one of these we may close our fragmentary record of the earlier movement.

About the year 1859 retreats for laymen were established during the vacations at the ecclesiastical seminary of Viviers. Twenty years later we find two hundred and fifty men making retreats there in the course of one season—a number which was not unsatisfactory for those days. They were largely recruited from among the members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, to whom circulars had been sent out by a committee of laymen under the direction of the

* See the chapter on Retreats for Women.

Bishop. It was not the first time that this great Society had co-operated in the work; nor was it to be the last. But we are now in sight of the modern revival of popular retreats, to which the following chapters will be devoted.

CHAPTER III

THE RECENT REVIVAL: FRANCE

THE revival of popular retreats during the past thirty years has been a real revival and no mere flicker of low vitality due to artificial stimulus. We have here something more than a picturesque and pathetic attempt to revive a bygone institution. We are going to examine one of those mighty stirrings by the Spirit of God which have been vouchsafed to the Church from time to time since the days of Pentecost.

The full intensity of that movement we cannot, of course, measure. It is an inward thing, not to be gauged by our external standards of success. It is a silent thing which does not express itself by the methods of the advertiser. We shall have to be content with an outside view of it—with results that can be counted and measured, or with the faltering attempts to express themselves made by those who have experienced it. *Da amantem!* Those who have ever honestly made a retreat may be able to fill out the sketch for themselves.

The modern revival of retreats for the people

FAYT (See p. 71).

[*To face p.* 48.

began quietly, as God's works commonly do. Indeed, it is difficult to date its beginning. It must be remembered that popular retreats had never wholly died out. They had, as we have seen, persisted in Brittany under the direction of the curés, and they had appeared intermittently in other countries. Yet this sporadic appearance was something very different from the universal and vigorous growth which marks the present time, when the Society of Jesus alone has about a hundred flourishing retreat-houses for the laity in every quarter of the globe and when twenty-five thousand people make annual retreats in Belgium.

One of the most obvious indications of the second spring which was to follow in France (and France led the revival) came from the promoters of the *Œuvre des Cercles Catholiques d'ouvriers*—that remarkable movement of which the Comte de Mun was the mainspring.*

The founders of the *Cercles* soon perceived the need of retreats for themselves. Their aim was to influence others for good, and this demanded the preliminary task of sanctifying themselves. Now self-sanctification amid the turmoil of propaganda is no easy task. How was union with God to be won except by an occasional withdrawal into solitude?

The first chaplain of the committee of the

* See the *Manual des Retraites*, by Père Alet (Paris Association Catholique, 1892) and *Ma Vocation sociale* by the Comte de Mun.

Cercles was Père Hubin, S.J., who set himself to promote the practice of an annual retreat among the members of the committee. He put it to the young men of position whose meetings in the Rue de Sèvres he used to direct. The response was generous, and the young men found their way to the retreat-house at Athis-Mons. By 1874 these retreats were firmly established. Père Hubin directed them and eighty men attended the first.

The Comte de Mun has testified to the influence of this retreat-house upon the great social movement which he had inaugurated. He tells us that all his most active lieutenants were formed in the school of the retreat. At Athis they were given a robust education of heart and soul which made them invincible. There they cultivated a chivalrous piety and formed generous resolutions. Timid Christians were transformed into ardent apostles. In the atmosphere of a common ideal, acquaintanceships ripened into fruitful friendships.*

In 1880 the house at Athis was sold and the retreats were transferred to the Villa Manrèze at Clamart, which had been built originally for clergy retreats. In the course of 1884 the *Cercles* arranged thirteen retreats; the following year the number rose to twenty-five. Meanwhile retreats began to be organised for particular parishes, or for conferences of the Society

* *Ma Vocation sociale*, p. 106.

of St Vincent de Paul. About the same time retreats for women were being given annually in several parts of France.

A retreat for fathers of families had been arranged at Amiens as early as 1866. Appealing circulars were sent out to which the fathers of families paid not the least attention. At last some eighteen of them were induced to come. The following year there were thirty-two.

In 1877 the retreat-house at Clamart was founded and soon became deservedly popular. During the second year two hundred and eleven priests and one hundred and six laymen made retreats there. A letter written in October, 1879, gives a vivid picture of a retreat given to thirty members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul at the monastery of Fontfroide, Carcassone, an eleventh century Cisterian abbey. The retreat-makers were all men of high social position and the results are said to have been remarkable.

At Séez retreats for laymen were given in the ecclesiastical seminary during the vacations: at Paray-le-Monial in the house of the tertiaries. In various directions we see experiments being made and expedients adopted, many of which were to become permanent features of the later retreat movement. At this time the popular retreat is, so to say, in the crucible. It is still regarded by many as a novel and expensive freak.

And now came the flood tide. Hitherto retreats had mainly been organised for the

wealthier and leisured classes of society. The great need of the age was retreats for working men and people of small means. This fact was realised by Père Watrigant, S.J., who may justly be called the pioneer of popular retreats in modern times.

In the year 1881 he set out to establish a house of retreats for business men in the north of France. He had no house, no money, no support, and practically no encouragement. But he never wavered. Convinced of the necessity of the work, he set about to achieve it. His great resource was prayer. He prayed, and he urged others to pray—and the consequence was that obstacles melted away from before him. Here is an example: He made a novena to St Joseph asking that Saint to find him a suitable house. The prayer was answered. An excellent house was discovered, suited in every way to the work of retreats. But unfortunately the owner had not the smallest intention of selling or letting it. To repeated applications he returned a flat refusal. Why should he sell the house? He wanted it, and there was an end of the matter. Another novena was made—this time more explicit. Its petition was that this house might be secured for the work of retreats. At the end of the novena the owner suddenly resolved to hand over the house rent free to Père Watrigant for the required purpose.

Encouraged by this success, Père Watrigant

became a perfect glutton for prayers. He demanded prayers from monks and nuns, priests and laymen. He tells us of his delight at hearing that a venerable Carthusian was in the habit of placing on the altar near his corporal during Mass a list of the retreats to be given in the new house of Château-Blanc. To this great stream of fervent prayer he attributes, not without reason, the enormous success of this retreat-house. Catholics in England will, let us hope, win similar blessings on our own houses of retreat. This kind of almsgiving is within the reach of all and is of unspeakable importance.

Of course Père Watrigant had his moments of discouragement. But he cheered himself by keeping on his table a picture of St Camillus de Lellis. For St Camillus, too, had suffered from discouragement; and to him, as he prayed before his crucifix, came these words: "Why are you discouraged, Camillus? It is My work that you are doing, not your own."

The secular clergy of the north of France co-operated most cordially in the work. Leading laymen gave it their support, journalists wrote of it, university professors and deputies advocated it at Catholic Congresses. Père Watrigant attaches much importance to the service thus rendered to the cause, especially by the Congress papers, which, he says, did much to popularise the idea of these retreats among men of the world to whom it was quite unfamiliar. Eleven re-

treats were given at Château-Blanc in 1882 to two hundred and forty men. The numbers rose steadily. Since that time about thirty-six thousand men have made retreats in that one establishment. Various kinds of retreats were gradually introduced and took their place as annual fixtures—retreats for priests, retreats for Catholic employers, retreats for Conferences of St Vincent de Paul, retreats for working men, for the Third Order of St Francis, for Catholic teachers, for artists, for soldiers, for seminarists, for college students, for foremen, for Catholic doctors, and so on. By having separate retreats for the various classes and occupations it is possible to make the points and instructions bear directly and in detail upon the daily lives of those to whom they are addressed.

Special stress was laid by Père Watrigant on the retreats for working men. He remembered the social standing of the Apostles, the number and the needs of the modern working population, the special message of the Church to the toiler. In spite of much shaking of heads he speedily threw open Château-Blanc to the labouring classes. The invitation was accepted with enthusiasm.

The work of organisation was, as usual, extremely laborious, and Père Watrigant needed all his faith and courage. He carried it on with unfaltering zeal until 1887, when he was succeeded by Père Doyotte, who killed himself with

overwork and lies buried in the grounds of the retreat-house. In him the north of France lost an apostle and countless Catholics a friend. Even in these early days of Château-Blanc the effects of the retreats upon the social life of the country became apparent. Thus in 1884, in connection with this retreat-house, was founded the great Association of Catholic Employers of the north of France, of which more hereafter. In 1890 Château-Blanc was found much too small for the crowds which flocked to it, and the present magnificent mansion, Notre-Dame du Haut-Mont, was built at Mouvaux, not far from the old house.

Visitors to Lille will do well to pay a visit to Haut-Mont, which may be reached by steam tram in half an hour.

The retreat-house is an immense building of red brick and white stone, standing well back from the road. The style is Flemish, and the great masses of masonry are relieved by gables and arches. In front of the house is a wide lawn on which stands a statue of the Sacred Heart with arms outstretched in welcome to the visitor who seeks peace and strength within this hospital for sick souls. The statue has an interesting history. Years ago the house was threatened with destruction by the enemies of the Church. United and earnest prayers were offered to avert the danger. The storm passed off, and the grateful clients of the retreat-house

raised the statue in thanksgiving. Behind the house, which contains accommodation for fifty men, is a magnificent park, well timbered, and stretching far into the distance with its lawns and streams and shrines; an ideal place for quiet meditation. We are given the warmest of welcomes by a young priest who is a member of the resident staff. His enthusiasm for the work is infectious and, like Père Watrigant, he is chiefly interested not in statistics nor in fine buildings, but in the stream of grace which descends constantly and almost visibly upon the men who gather in that house for retreat. His first words are characteristic of the spirit in which he works and the atmosphere in which he lives. He tells us that a request for prayers for the retreat-house had recently been sent round to a great number of convents and monasteries, and that the result had been an immediate and very remarkable development of the work. A great wave of grace seemed to sweep down in Pentecostal fashion upon the house; men came to it in largely increasing numbers, and the effects of the retreats became more striking than ever before. If anyone loses his appreciation of the supernatural world, let him visit a retreat-house: he will there find God's Spirit revealing Itself to simple working men and flooding their lives with joy.*

* About 36,000 men have made retreats at this one establishment. In 1911 it received 1829 men.

One despairs of conveying any adequate impression of the wonderful things that happen every week at Mouvaux. Those who live there can tell you story after story, interminably, of how dull, ordinary, discouraged people blaze up into ardent apostles and find a new value and dignity in life. These retreats give men high ideals. It is no mere "revival," no temporary appeal to the emotions: it is the beginning of a new life of self-knowledge and self-mastery, a clarifying of the mind, a strengthening of the will. Men who have made retreats become men of grit, and no longer the victims of their environment.

Here is a miner who has made a retreat. He declares that he will make his fellow-miners come too, for it is just what they need to lift them from the dull materialism of their lives. He tries—and fails. He tries again. His importunity irritates his companions. They hustle him one day and tear the clothes off his back. He gets another suit—and tries again. They avoid him like a plague. At last his dogged perseverance succeeds: those whom he persuades to make a retreat become his loyalest friends. Here is a workman who has made a profound impression upon his employer by his honesty, his cheerfulness, his kindliness. The employer, a careless Catholic, asks the man where he has learnt the art of life so well: the man points to the retreat-house and persuades his boss to try the experi-

ment. The latter is now foremost in all Catholic enterprises, a president of the S.V.P., and a model employer. This is what tells—the action of one man on another. The example of a clean-living, straight, manly, kind-hearted man in a factory or workshop is the best advertisement for the retreats. "I do admire So-and-so. I want to be like him. What makes him like that?"—and so inquiries are made and a fresh pilgrim makes his way to the retreat-house. At Mouvaux the working men are not sent into retreat by their employers: they are sent into retreat by each other. It is the apostolate of the workman by the workman.

Great stress is laid here upon the formation of an élite—a picked band of apostles. That is the chief work of the retreat-house—to produce not a crowd of averagely good Christians, but a few apostles, men of noble heart and high ideals and clear convictions who will be the salt of the earth. These retreats are not mere courses of sermons to miscellaneous crowds: they are the building-up of individual human beings. The men are taken one by one by wise and sympathetic guides and shown how to put order into their lives, to acquire high ringing ideals, to become crusaders in the noblest of causes. They go back to their parishes determined to throw themselves heartily into all parochial works, to rally round their priests, to help to the best of their power in restoring all things in Christ.

These retreats do not make men sentimentalists or dreamers. On the contrary, they make men sternly practical. They have blossomed out into a number of very sensible organisations for the welfare of men's souls and bodies. Here, for instance, is an association of working men called the "Knights of the Cross," who devote themselves to propagating the Catholic Press.

They realise very well that the cause of Christ —the cause of true civilisation—is very considerably bound up with the cause of the Catholic Press: so with practical directness these men devote their little spare time to the selling of Catholic newspapers. They strive to dissuade their fellow-workmen from buying pernicious newspapers which would lower their ideals, pander to their passions, and sow discontent in their minds. Such literature they strive to replace by healthy mind-stuff. Two workmen, one of whom could neither read nor write, have to my knowledge secured between them five hundred new subscribers to a Catholic daily paper.

These apostles of the Press have to put up with ridicule, and sometimes even with violence. But they are not discouraged: for the retreat is a school of heroism.

We leave this retreat-house with regret. It is one of the most consoling spots in poor, desolate France; for not only is it supplying a stream of apostles for the north of France, but it has

led to the formation of many other retreat-houses in that country, all of which are drilling not an army of revolutionaries but a high-hearted band of apostles and true reformers who will eventually, we may hope, lead back their countrymen to the Church of their forefathers, the Church which gave France her old-time glory.*

Of these other French houses it is not wise to speak in detail. The French Government is carrying out its attempt to strangle Christianity with much ingenuity and vigilance, so that the work of retreats has to be conducted with con-considerable caution. Of the house founded at Epinay, near Paris, we may indeed speak freely, for it has, unhappily, been closed; though we may console ourselves with the reflection that its work is being carried on even more effectively —elsewhere.

The following account of the house at Epinay is taken from an article in the *Month* for November, 1907, by Father Cyril Martindale, S.J.:

"Near the empty palace which from Saint-Germain-en-Laye overlooks the vast plain, with the one hill that curtains Paris, the retreats for men were opened in 1892. The work moved heavily at first, though the results had their encouraging aspect: thirty-six retreats in the first three years were given; 517 exercitants were housed. Quite

* There are at present no less than sixty-one retreat-houses in France, including those for women.

at the end of 1894, Christmas saw the real beginning of the present work in the Villa St-Joseph, in the suburb of Epinay—no royal neighbourhood this time, nor perched on any hill-crest to which double-engined trains must painfully puff upwards; but a plain, working locality, where the Seine is turbid, and to reach which you must leave behind St-Denis, where all the kings were buried.

"St-Joseph is a typical villa of the prosperous suburban sort, added to by its ecclesiastical possessors in a style less complacently chaotic than experience (gathered, we own, in England) might have led us to expect. No doubt the lodge is far from the main building; and a hundred yards must be traversed, in open air, for exercitants to reach refectory; but for all that, the white buildings are not without their dignity, and splendid trees screen the points where architectural unity might have been desiderated. The chapel is, like all French chapels, clean and gay, and requiring experience in the Briton who would fain appreciate the foreign at its true worth; and though he would yearn to crop and roll the lawns, and lay down finer gravel, he must confess that certain flower-beds are not unworthy of Hyde Park. The grounds slope abruptly down, through woods, to a large double bowling-court, across whose fence of trees gleams the Seine.

"Once installed, the enterprise throve. The total for the second triennium of its existence (1895-1897) marked 68 retreats and 1537 exercitants, as compared to the 36 and 517 of the days at Saint-Germain. It would be tedious to follow, year by year, the almost steady increase which has been

registered. 1902 was the first year in which the *thousand* was passed—1028 exercitants visited the house. 1903 and 1905 seem to have been years blessed beyond the rest; 1319 and 1376 were the numbers of those who then made the *Exercises* at St-Joseph. In 1906 there were 1179.

"Though the retreats vary in duration and character—single days of recollection for the laity and (admirable work, not unknown, thank God, in England) for the clergy are frequent—yet there is no doubt that the collective retreats for men form the staple work done at Epinay. Three days are spent in retreat by all who come; and, in addition to the general retreats for all who like to attend, we have noted special groups of days set aside for definite *classes* of exercitants—for students, for railway porters, for men bound for military service."

The French have devised a very valuable method of organising retreats in districts where a permanent house is out of the question. By means of the *Œuvre des Retraites Régionales* they are able to extend the benefits of retreats all over the country and to stir up a spirit of faith and devotion in the various departments one by one.

The method employed is as follows: When a fresh field of operations is to be opened up and the work introduced into a new district, the first thing to be done is to appoint a local committee. Its members borrow or hire for a few days some commodious house in the neighbourhood—a

château of which the owners are abroad, a school during the holidays, a seminary during vacations, a hotel out of the season. This is fitted up to receive twenty or thirty or forty visitors. Then a circular is drawn up and sent to a number of local residents, who have been selected as likely subjects for retreat by the committee and local clergy. This circular announces the time and place of the retreat, gives the order of the day, and sums up the advantages of such a gathering. It is signed by fifty or sixty local Catholics of repute, representing various social grades. Indeed the lists of names are somewhat astonishing, and we cannot wonder that they prove so effective. We find on one list before us the names of a distinguished admiral, of various respectable shopkeepers, of a deputy or two, of some local doctors and lawyers, of noblemen distinguished at least for their piety, of an innkeeper of good repute, and so on. We may be sure that every recipient of this invitation will find on the list at least one or two names which will appeal to him and allay the suspicion which might arise if the senders represented but one class of society. Should he fight shy of the admiral, he may be reassured by the innkeeper, with whom, perhaps, he has often broached a friendly bottle. Should he sniff at the shopkeeper he may gain fresh courage at the sight of the viscount—whose bottles he possibly supplies. At first there may be a little shyness or stiffness

among the assembled guests. But a meditation or two on "the end of man" at once dissipates anything of the sort, and henceforth all is simple and unaffected harmony and unselfish work for God. There is nothing like a retreat for pulling men together on the common basis of their Catholic faith: it is a cure for all snobbishness, disdain, or "side."

These circulars are reinforced by private correspondence and personal interviews. The retreats for men are generally preceded by retreats for women—and the latter are in consequence enthusiastic in the work of propaganda among their male relatives and friends. The guests each contribute some twenty francs for board and lodging during the three days; but this sum is readily supplied by the committee in cases where it would prove a strain on the resources of the visitor.

These "flying retreats," as they have been happily called by their energetic and amiable promoter, the Abbé de Penfentenyo, are generally given a strongly marked social colour. Much stress is laid on Catholic social action by those who direct them, and it is this feature which often attracts those who might not otherwise take part in them. At first the plan was tried of devoting a day at the conclusion of the retreat to a conference on social questions: a plan which has been tried in this country and has worked admirably. Later on, however, it was

LIÉGE (See p. 80).

[*To face p.* 64.

thought advisable to introduce instructions on social topics into the retreat itself. Three afternoon conferences are given, in which the attention of the retreat-makers is particularly directed to the Catholic religious and social works which exist in their own district, and efforts are made to increase the number of Catholic lay helpers who will co-operate loyally with the clergy in the support of such works.

These regional retreats have had a fair measure of success. Founded in 1902, they numbered sixty-nine in the first six years, and were attended by over a thousand different men. In 1910 retreats were given at nearly thirty centres to one thousand one hundred and ninety-seven men.*

Of the enthusiasm produced by these French retreats the present writer can speak from experience. To make a retreat with ninety French working men is an experience not easily forgotten. Not that the enthusiasm is noisy or effervescing: on the contrary, what strikes one most is the peace and orderly calm of the whole business. Silence is admirably observed, and the various evolutions are performed in a most serious fashion. But the strong forces at work beneath reveal themselves in the way the men pray, in their talks during time of recreation, in the notes they leave behind, in the lives they lead afterwards.

* See Appendix.

The earnestness of the men and the profound spiritual change worked in them find expression in incidents sometimes humorous, often touching. A workman was found one night at eleven o'clock with his light still burning. When asked for an explanation he replied that he was saying a thousand " Hail Marys "—a penance imposed upon him by his wife for sleeping in church.

" But you don't sleep during the retreat? "

" No, but that's different. The Father doesn't preach like others. *He explains things!* "

One day ten Socialists presented themselves at a retreat-house. They had come for a " lark." They were told that they would be very welcome —on condition that they would keep the rules and do as the rest did. They agreed—and were soon carried away by the stream. " We were devils when we came," said one of them as they left. Each subscribed a franc to buy a crucifix to be put up in the factory where they all worked. Next year they returned for another retreat and brought twenty-six other workmen with them from the same factory.

A workman arrived at a retreat-house (possibly under pressure from his wife) without any very clear idea as to what he was in for. He anticipated dungeons, a discipline and a fast in bread and water. He was surprised to find the fare better than what he was accustomed to and was puzzled. At the end of the retreat he resolved

that he must take it out of himself somehow. He was a sinner and must do penance. So during the next year he gave up his usual halfpenny cup of coffee just before going to work and put by the money thus saved. With it he paid for another man whom he brought with him to the retreat a twelvemonth later.

The competition for places on the announcement of a retreat is sometimes severe. At one retreat at Armentières notice was given that ninety-six rooms were available. One hundred and five men presented themselves. Lots were drawn, and nine men were told that they must go home and come another time. Eight disconsolate figures were soon seen trudging off down the avenue. Where was the ninth? The mystery was only solved later on when the men retired to their rooms. There was a loud wail from Number 32: "Here he is, Father, *in my bed!*" The man had bolted to the first bedroom he could find as soon as his rejection had been made known. One is glad to learn that he was given a shakedown in an attic.

These French retreat-houses are doing an incalculably good work. In them hundreds of men every year are filled with an apostolic zeal and sent back to their work resolved to use all their influence for the future in promoting God's glory and the welfare of His Church. Nor is this a mere passing enthusiasm. Churches hitherto almost deserted now count their regular

communicants by hundreds. Men find in their three days of meditation and prayer the light and strength to shape their lives anew. And so the ever-growing stream of the seekers after justice flows into these peaceful sanctuaries and flows forth again to regenerate an apostate country. "Then went forth many into the desert seeking justice and judgment." *

We cannot fail to recognise that this is, among other things, a social work of the very highest importance. It is a healing of the social sores of France. It goes straight to the moral and religious evils which lie at the bottom of social troubles. It tends to unite the severed classes, to make the rich man just and merciful, and the poor man conscientious. It brings the spirit of Catholicism once more into the family. It renews all things in Christ.

Every year hundreds of men are taken one by one and appealed to—and it is Christ Himself Who appeals—for three wonderful days. The work is a supernatural one. Pentecost is renewed again and again, and the fervent few go forth in confidence to act upon the indifferent many.

The fervent few are, of course, *very* few when compared with the vast numbers of the disaffected. Yet it is abundantly clear from the history of the Church in every age that even a very few really devoted, detached and determined men can do far more for the spread of

* 1 Mac. ii. 29.

religion than an innumerable crowd of the selfish and indifferent. "Give me ten really detached men and I will convert the world," is a saying the eminent reasonableness of which must appeal to every Catholic.

CHAPTER IV

BELGIUM AND HOLLAND

THE idea of retreats for the working classes soon spread from France to Belgium.

At the Congress of Liége, in 1890, a Catholic manufacturer from the north of France gave his Belgian co-religionists a useful piece of advice: "If you want apostles, get men to make retreats." He had seen the improvement in character and the keen religious spirit introduced among his own employees as the result of the retreats already described.

The Bishops responded to the suggestion. "Start this apostolate," said the Bishop of Liége, Mgr. Doutreloux, "and I will cover it with blessings."

A few days later Père Lechien gathered together sixteen gentlemen for a retreat at Marchienne-au-Pont, and forty-two working men at the college of Charleroi. The latter came every morning to the college and dispersed at night to their own homes. This was soon seen to be an unsatisfactory arrangement. If a retreat is to succeed the men must be withdrawn altogether from their normal surroundings.

Interruptions are fatal. The recollection must be continuous.

Emboldened by the enthusiasm with which this first retreat was received by the workmen, Père Lechien proceeded to arrange further retreats at Charleroi, this time making arrangements to keep the men the whole time. The large hall of the college was converted into a dormitory, and eighty-four men were admitted out of one hundred and twenty-seven applicants. Over a score of these were wearing the Socialist badge when they arrived. But the retreat showed them a better way of securing social reform, and the badges were left behind at the retreat-house—the first of a large and interesting collection of similar trophies.

This retreat was started amid some excitement. A fortnight earlier the *Journal de Charleroi* had threatened a riot, and the police were on the scene on the Saturday evening to protect the retreat-makers on their arrival. The retreat was, in spite of these alarms, a great success, and it became evident that a permanent house must be established to supply the increasing demand for retreats by the working men.

In April, 1892, the Château of Fayt in the Province of Hainault was purchased, and four months later a series of retreats was started, which has continued without interruption till the present time.

This famous retreat-house will be familiar to

many from the pages of René Bazin's famous novel, *Le Blé qui lève*, a sixpenny translation of which (*The Rising Corn*) lately appeared on our bookstalls. It will be remembered that the most striking chapter of that book is the one which describes a retreat made by the hero, Gilbert Cloquet, at Fayt.

The house is a white, four-storied château, standing back in glorious grounds. Great beds of begonias gave us a blazing welcome. "Come inside and enjoy yourself," they shout. "This is a house for the Catholic people. Make yourself at home. Come away from the noise and racket of life and get the smuts of the city washed out of your brain. Come and see God at His nearest and man at his best."

There are eighty-six bedrooms, so they can put us up. Every year about two thousand men come here for a full three days' retreat and countless others for days of recollection, conferences, and the like. We take a preliminary look round the house. The chapel dances with light and colour—the red, white, and gold may seem daring to sober British tastes, but the daring is justified. One feels inclined to sing—as one should in a chapel.

There is a fine "Salle des Conférences" on the walls of which we see the familiar "Catechism in Pictures"—illustrating the Apostles' Creed, the Sacraments, the Commandments, the Four Last Things. These pictures soak in.

It is all part of the plot. They recur to the memory during the meditations or the quiet rambles in the park, just as the pictures and carvings of our old cathedrals and parish churches used to fill the imaginations of our forefathers as they went about their work. There was no *Daily Snapshot* (or whatever the name of the thing is) in the Middle Ages to multiply phantasms of simpering actresses and heroes of the turf. People were content with Roods and Madonnas and saints—which did somehow brighten their lives.

We stroll through the grounds, which seem interminable. Grave silent cedars meet our mood on the first day of the retreat. Rose alleys lure us on the third. All the time there is the white statue of the Mother and the Child to keep us up to the mark. On the pedestal is the inscription:

NOTRE-DAME DU TRAVAIL
PRIEZ POUR NOUS

"Our Lady of Work." Most of the men who come here have hands that are hard with toil. It is good for them to remember that God's Mother was a working woman. Moreover, the inscription is a reminder to all who make retreats that they are in for hard work. "Spiritual Exercises" is no misnomer. "Put your back into it," says the white statue.

The house is a great power-station for the

spiritual life of one-third of Belgium. It is the centre of a marvellous organisation which spreads over three out of the nine provinces. But of this organisation for recruiting and for grouping, for keeping up religious fervour and for promoting social action, something will be said in a subsequent chapter.

One of the attractions of Fayt is the presence of Père Lechien himself, the pioneer of workmen's retreats in Belgium, who continues his apostolate with undiminished vigour. Everyone knows Père Lechien. He has done for retreat-houses in Belgium what Père Watrigant has done in France. He has built them, ruled them, studied them, begged for them; and he is always ready to talk about them. He has brought their organisation to a wonderful pitch of perfection as we shall have occasion to see.

But Père Lechien must not be pictured as a mere clever business man who also happens to be a priest. He never falls a victim to the superstition of numbers. He never confuses the means with the end, for he is supernatural to the finger-tips.

"A retreat is a *tête-à-tête* with God," he says: and those who have made retreats will recognise the accuracy of the description. He is convinced of the necessity of putting a high standard before the man who has the pluck to come to a retreat-house. (It may be said that for a second visit no pluck is required.) He believes in making

the *régime* as strict as possible: "We haven't enough confidence in the people," he says. The more silence the better—such is his motto. Any attempt to turn the retreat into a loafing, lazy week-end he utterly reprobates. Men can get that sort of thing better elsewhere They do not come for that. They ask to be taken seriously.

In August, 1894, a second house was founded by Père Victor Van de Put at Ghent. In the first year retreats were given to three hundred men in eleven groups; in 1908 to one thousand three hundred and fourteen men in thirty-six groups. Contrary to the general rule, the house is situated in the town itself. True, it has a garden, but we miss the spacious quiet of Fayt or Mouvaux. There are forty-six cosy little bedrooms, lit by electric light. The retreats are continued right through the winter and about fifteen hundred men follow them every year. The charge is ten francs, part of which is defrayed by committees of gentlemen. The retreats are generally given during the year by a single Father set aside for the purpose, a custom which is found in some other retreat-houses. There is much difference of opinion as to whether this plan is a good one. No doubt the Father gains an immense amount of experience and comes to know the needs of the retreat-maker very thoroughly; on the other hand, it is contended that he is likely to grow stale at the work.

Two or three retreats are given each year at

Ghent to those who are about to put in their time of military service. Other retreats are given to the *Franchmans*—men who go over to France to work during the summer. Others again are given to groups of Socialists. Père Desorgher (who aided Père Van de Put to start the house) is of opinion that those retreats have the best results which are given to members of one class and of one parish. On their return home they support each other and are able to create a sound public opinion, whereas the isolated retreat-maker is liable to be discouraged and to take the drab colour of those about him.

In 1896 the novitiate of St Francis Xavier at Arlon was adopted for the use of retreats to be given to the working men of Luxemburg. The first retreat was, however, given to professional and business men, who, as a matter of fact, make at least occasional retreats at most of the houses which are here described. At the first workmen's retreat, properly so called, twenty-eight men put in an appearance. The beginnings were, as is so often the case, attended with many difficulties. But Père Cus (later a missionary in the Congo) threw himself into the work with ardour, and in 1904 there were nine hundred and twenty men in retreat at Arlon. In 1906 the number rose to fourteen hundred. A monthly bulletin in connection with this house was started in 1907.

Three years after the foundation at Arlon

came the house at Lierre, also founded by Père Van de Put. By 1907 some four hundred and twenty retreats had been given to over seventeen thousand men. The men come from the neighbouring districts, from the surrounding villages, and even from the more distant towns like Antwerp and Louvain. They include agricultural labourers, masons, navvies, carpenters, railway employees and the like; but not infrequently a special retreat will be given to a group of students, or employers, or soldiers, or professional men, or priests.

The house, which, though in the town, stands in extensive grounds, is a cheerful building of red brick and stone, built, as the Father Superior maintains, in the very purest Flemish style. Next to the house is a chapel, for the exclusive use of those who make the retreats. The garden is well planted with trees, and the men may walk about in it at their pleasure. A garden, it may be remarked, is indispensable for a retreat. The men are not accustomed to dwell with their own thoughts, and to box them up in a small room for three days would conduce to a state of nervous tension quite fatal to success. In the present case, besides the garden, we find a large winter-garden or glass-enclosed court, where the men can take exercise in wet weather. The ground floor of the house is occupied by the kitchen, the dining-hall, the common room, billiard-room, and library. The upper stories

contain some fifty bedrooms, plainly furnished. Every part of the house is beautifully light, and there seems to be white paint everywhere.

As the retreats in the various houses all bear a certainly family likeness; some account of what happens at Lierre will suffice for the rest.

We may imagine ourselves present at the arrival of a batch of workmen, some of whom, probably, have never made a retreat before. The house wears a somewhat depressed air during the first evening, especially if many are making a retreat for the first time. Some of the men look intensely bored; some are shy and awkward, others assume an air of suspicious defiance, as if to intimate that *they* at least are not going to be imposed upon. Attempts to engage in conversation with them are not particularly encouraging. They stray about the galleries, staring at the religious pictures and statues, or exchanging whispered comments. The supper-bell comes as a relief, and the crowd drifts off to the dining-hall. After supper the men amuse themselves as they will with cards and billiards, pipes and beer. Then follows Benediction and a short explanation of the retreat, its objects, the rules of the house, and so forth.

The following is the "order of the day" for the next three days: The men rise at 6, and, after morning prayers in common, hear Mass. During breakfast a spiritual book is read for a few minutes. After breakfast the men smoke,

walk about the grounds, or play at such games as bowls, billiards and draughts. At 8.15 they go to the chapel, where the priest who is conducing the retreat sets before them for the space of about half an hour some elementary thoughts or points. They then go to their rooms in silence and think over what they have just heard. Then they read a religious book (the Gospels, the *Imitation of Christ*, the life of some saint, and so forth) in the grounds or reading-room, or in their own rooms. Later on they say the rosary together, walking in the grounds or in the covered court. At 10.30 there are " points " in the chapel as before, followed again by " meditation " in private. After the midday dinner the men amuse themselves as after breakfast. At 2 p.m. come " Stations of the Cross," spiritual reading, rosary in the grounds, and a hymn in the chapel; then the afternoon " points and meditation." At 4.30, coffee and conversation. Strict silence is maintained excepting during these fixed periods after meals. Then more spiritual reading, rosary in the garden, hymn in the chapel, evening " points and meditation." Supper at 7 is followed by recreation as before. Finally Benediction at 9.30 and night prayers. Confessions are heard on the second day, and Holy Communion is administered on the third. On the morning of the fourth the men take their departure.

This programme does not sound exciting.

To those who have never had practical experience of a retreat, it might appear wearisome in the extreme. Such, indeed, is the view generally taken of it on their arrival in the house by the workmen who make it for the first time. Yet the fact remains that the very men who, it may be, showed every signs of boredom at the beginning, and during the first and even the second day, are obviously sorry to leave the house on the morning of the fourth, and declare their intention of coming the following year. Indeed, it is sometimes no easy matter to get rid of them. They frequently leave behind them in their rooms letters expressing their gratitude; these notes are often extremely touching in their simple sincerity.

The fifth retreat-house for workers in Belgium was founded at Liége in 1901 by Père Criquelion. It stands on a high hill overlooking the city and is named Notre-Dame de Xhovémont. Below us we see the forest of spires with their background of hills; to the right are dull clouds of smoke from the works at Seraing. In striking contrast with the vast and busy hive of industry below us is the calm freshness of the place in which we stand. What a blessing for the toilers to get up into this restful spot with its cool breezes and plentiful verdure!—that is the first thought that strikes us. Here, at least, they can learn how to think and to pray.

The house is a light, spacious building, con-

RETREAT-MAKERS AT LIÉGE.

[*To face p.* 80.

taining about fifty bedrooms for those who make retreats, a large recreation-room, a chapel, a dining-hall, and rooms reserved for the small staff. Along the front of the house runs a glass-covered terrace where the men can walk in all weathers.

During the second year of its existence the house at Liége received about seventeen hundred men in retreat. This number has been more or less steadily maintained ever since.

The sixth and last of the Belgian retreat-houses for working men, at Alken, near Hasselt, was founded in 1904, again by Père Van de Put. It is one of the most magnificent of all the retreat-houses and is thoroughly well-planned in every detail. By the end of 1907 it had received three thousand three hundred and eighty-five men in retreat.

The establishing of this house is an excellent example of the alertness and foresight of the Belgian Catholics. Situated amid a poor agricultural population it may have appeared to the unreflecting to be singularly ill-placed. But it was known that coal had been discovered in the district and that in a few years time the whole neighbourhood would be a hive of industry. Hitherto, Catholics have generally come deplorably late upon the scene of such industrial developments. The big towns spring up, the people multiply with darkened minds and crooked souls; the anti-religious propaganda

and a corrupt Press have it all their own way—and the Church has to pick up the pieces as best she can. But in this case the growing population was to find a retreat-house ready for them. Bands of apostles were to be at work from the first.

Something must be added about a Belgian retreat-house which, though it gives the *Exercises* almost exclusively to the professional and leisured classes, was, as at matter of fact, the first retreat-house for laymen to be started in the country.

In 1864 three young men (the Comte de Bergeyck, the Comte Alfred Cornet de Peissant and M. Eugène de Peneranda) asked leave to make a retreat at Tronchiennes. They were delighted with the experience, and begged to be allowed to return the following year. So the custom grew, and friends joined them by degrees. In 1868 the retreat-makers numbered twenty-one. The following year two retreats had to be given instead of one. In 1877 there were five retreats. In 1882 a separate wing was built on to the existing noviceship, etc., to accomodate the growing influx of retreat-makers, who, two years later, numbered a couple of hundred. It was now possible to accommodate eighty men at a time. At present retreats are given each year to about four hundred gentlemen, exclusive of those who make private retreats. Since 1867 the work has

been under the direction of the veteran apostle of retreats Père Adolphe Petit.

Such, then, is the movement in Belgium to-day. About ten thousand men, mostly of the working classes, make retreats in Belgium every year. About one hundred and twenty thousand men have made retreats since the opening of the first house at Fayt twenty years ago. It must be added that more women make retreats in Belgium than men; but of retreats for women an account will be given later on.

If the Catholics of Holland came late into the field in this matter of retreats, they have at least made up for lost time. When we consider that Holland has a Catholic population about the same size as that of England (where we are always deploring our paucity of numbers) the results secured are simply amazing.

In 1906 a small party of leading Dutch Catholics—Members of both Houses of Parliament, civil servants, professional men, and the like—went off to make a retreat in one of the Belgian houses. They soon found themselves thinking over their religious and social responsibilities. "Each one can do work for God and has to use his life for the service of God." They talked the matter over among themselves and agreed to give some of their time, thought, influence and fortune to the work of establishing a retreat-house in their own country. A committee was formed, a prominent politician being

elected treasurer. A subscription list was opened to which one member gave over £2000. In a few months they had collected close on £10,000, and secured the hearty approval of the Bishops, who urged the clergy to support it in every possible way as the most excellent form of apostolic work, inasmuch as it would train a nucleus of strong Catholics in each parish.

Father Cramer, S.J., was appointed director of the new organisation, and a leading architect was asked to design a retreat-house. He did so, very much on the lines of the house at Alken, already referred to. By May, 1908, the house (at Venlo) was ready—a vast, solid, unbeautiful structure, standing on the summit of what in Holland is called a hill. It forms a long rectangle, flanked by two smaller blocks, one of which is reserved for the community of half a dozen priests and lay-brothers. The house is two hundred and sixteen feet in length, seventy-six in breadth. On the ground floor is the refectory, a reading-room, a billiard-room, a cloak-room. Parallel to these runs a covered terrace used as a smoking-room—a boon in wet weather. There are seventy bedrooms, and the chapel forms an annexe. The woods extend over twenty acres.

Retreats are given at Venlo each week during almost the whole year to groups of about sixty people. Those who come are mostly farmers and labourers, with a certain number of artisans.

The people are mostly poor, but their faith and charity are remarkable, and the work thrives. More than *four thousand men* made retreats there during 1911.

Other retreat-houses have since been established in Holland. The Redemptorist Fathers started two in August 1910—St Alphonsus' House at Amersfoort, in the Archdiocese of Utrecht, and St Clement's House at Noordwijkerhout, near Leiden, in the diocese of Haarlem. A third house will be ready in May, 1912—St Gerard's House, Seppe, in the diocese of Breda.*

Each of the two existing houses contains sixty rooms. Retreats are given both to men and women. The men as a rule come on the Monday and leave on the Thursday evening. The women usually stay on till the Friday morning. The charge for the retreat varies with the class of retreat-maker—between 16s. 8d. and 6s. 8d.

During the course of the first year the numbers of those who made retreats in the two houses were as follows:

Married men, 780.
Unmarried men, 879.
Married women, 228.
Unmarried women, 1575.

At each of these two houses a Community of nuns provides for the temporal needs of the retreat-makers.

* Two other houses in Holland are being built by the Jesuits.

CHAPTER V

GERMANY, SPAIN, AND ITALY

Houses of retreat for working men are of more recent growth in Germany than in Belgium. They began at Munster in April, 1902. In the first two years nineteen retreats were given to six hundred and seventeen men. Another house was purchased at Viersen in the Archdiocese of Cologne in 1905. Of this we shall have a good deal to say. The following year witnessed the opening of a house at Trèves. Besides these, and other houses presently to be noted, occasional retreats are given to working men in various ecclesiastical seminaries and similar institutions, as, for example, at Freiburg, Rastatt, Bamberg, Würzburg, Beuron, Rautlingn and elsewhere. Some of these retreats are on quite a large scale. Thus at Feldkirch we remember ninety-four workmen in retreat at Xmas, 1905, and it may be noted that they came from all parts of Germany and Switzerland. This is a point worth remembering. A house of retreats does not limit its influence to the nearest town, or even to one diocese. It should attract men even from a considerable

distance. One finds workmen who have travelled over half France in order to make a retreat. And they were glad to get it even at that price.

The house at Viersen is in the diocese of the Archbishop of Cologne, and may be called the apple of his eye. Soon after the work had been started he recommended it to his clergy in the following terms:

"As your Reverences are no doubt well aware, some time ago there was opened at Viersen a house of retreat, designed especially for working men. So far six retreats of three days each have been given, and the number of those who made them was most gratifying. I commend this new undertaking most earnestly to the notice of the clergy, and especially to those priests whose missions lie in the industrial districts of the archdiocese. No doubt only a relatively small number of those who belong to the working classes can take part in these holy exercises; yet it is of no small importance that even a small minority of such men should in these days of retreat be fired with new zeal for the Kingdom of God, and so be ready to further it among their companions. These holy exercises are a real means, and not the least efficacious means, of protecting the faith of our working men, and of guarding them against the dangers which threaten them to-day. I recommend the new house and its material support to the generosity of clergy and people, and beg your Reverences to bring it to the notice of the Faithful whenever you have an opportunity."

The results at Viersen soon showed that the

Archbishop's confidence had not been misplaced. In 1905 there were seven retreats to two hundred and twenty-one men; in 1906 there were twenty-nine retreats to one thousand and ninety-one men; in 1907 there were twenty-six retreats to one thousand and sixty-five men.

We note that the men represented almost every imaginable trade and occupation. It will be enough to instance a few: Carpenters, bakers, printers, bookbinders, tailors, metal-workers, miners, weavers, shopkeepers, farmers, plasterers and clerks. In addition to these retreats, special retreats were given to men who were about to start their term of military service.

Viersen is in a mining district, and in the last three years some hundreds of miners have been among its visitors. There was a difficulty about arranging a special retreat for bakers. It could not be done without some danger of a local famine, since the men could not get substitutes enough. But they join on to the various retreats during the year, and some scores of them have thus been enabled to get away from their ovens for three days.

The very successful "Retreats for Recruits," which have been held at Viersen and elsewhere, deserve special attention.

The Catholics of Germany are making a great effort to secure that Catholic soldiers at all events shall be instinct with the Christianity which is so much stronger than iron. That is a good

thing for the German army regarded as a fighting machine; it is a still better thing for the German people regarded as a Christian nation. Here is a matter where we may well imitate German example. It will avail us little to multiply armaments if we are not at the same time producing a generation of self-controlled, duty-loving and God-fearing men. So many of the influences to which the young men of this country are exposed are enervating influences; there is little that is bracing about the literature they read, the talk they hear, the sights they see. Everything conspires to pull them down to a life of "mere animal rejoicing over mere animal pleasure," to use the words of Mr C. F. G. Masterman. They do not learn to develop a robust individuality, to cultivate "grit" and a sense of duty, to make the best of themselves. The consequent weakness of the individual becomes the weakness of the nation. Yet true patriots though the German Catholics are, their efforts to Christianise their soldiers do not primarily spring from a desire to improve their army as a fighting machine. Their first care is for immortal souls. A single soul is worth more than a fleet of battleships or a wilderness of barracks.

What, then, are the German Catholics doing? They are making an effort to build up the young recruit. The young recruit is emphatically not made of iron. Putty would be nearer the mark.

Instead of scanning military statistics and dealing with generalities, let us take a concrete case of a young German Catholic who receives a sudden summons to go through his enforced term of military service. He has probably never been away from home before, and his feelings are decidedly mixed. He has suddenly become an important personage in his village. He is made much of and treated as a kind of hero. He is probably very green. He does not quite know what he is in for, and can scarcely analyse his own feelings. There is the wrench of saying good-bye, the self-importance springing from his new dignity, the romance of the horizon that is opening out before him. But he has hardly time to think of all this, for he is busy packing up and seeing friends and making arrangements. He is starting a new career, but is too much hustled to weigh the importance of the step he is taking. What he really needs at this most critical juncture of his life is three days of quiet thought and earnest prayer. He needs to pull himself together, to brace himself up for his new calling. He does not know what he is in for. He should be told. He should be shown exactly to what influences he is going to be exposed. He should be fortified against temptation and given a healthy self-respect, a humble confidence in God. How can this be done save by a retreat?

Retreats for recruits! That is the work

which German Catholics are taking up with so much vigour and success. The first experiment was made at Viersen in 1905. Two retreats were announced for the benefit of those who had just been summoned to military service. Those who started the work were told that it was a perfectly fatuous enterprise. How could they expect young men to give up three days out of their short remaining stay at home, when they were in a ferment of excitement and fully occupied with packing up and being lionised? In spite of these depressing anticipations twenty-five recruits turned up for each of the retreats. At the end they were glad that they had come. The following year six retreats were given at Viersen, attended by one hundred and eighty-five recruits. The Archbishop of Cologne recommended the work in the warmest terms, and its good effects began to spread. In 1907 there were three hundred and forty-three recruits in retreat at Viersen. In 1908 there were six hundred and forty-seven—many being refused through lack of space. From this time onward the work increased by leaps and bounds. The following figures speak for themselves: Between 1st August and 6th October, 1909, two retreats every week were held at Viersen, all crowded to the utmost. They were attended by nine hundred and eighty-six recruits. Many had to sleep in neighbouring houses, and scores were refused. *During this same period* of nine

weeks, retreats were held in Munster (twelve retreats to six hundred and fourteen recruits), Trèves (four retreats to two hundred and eighty-four recruits), and elsewhere. At Werl and Risa special houses were erected for these retreats. Six houses in West Germany accomodated two thousand five hundred and eleven recruits. Yet other retreats were given elsewhere.*

These figures are sufficiently striking considering that the work is in its infancy. They give every promise of growing, and it is to be hoped that in time a considerable proportion of the seventy thousand Catholics who are summoned for military training each year may be able to fortify themselves by a preliminary retreat. And the results? One may gain some idea of them from the letters received from the recruits themselves. The following extracts may suffice:

"Without the retreat I should have been lost in the army."

"If I had not gone to St Remigius (Viersen) I should have gone utterly to the bad. Now I begin to be a man again."

"Many a young man makes shipwreck of his faith in the barracks" (this from a recruit who goes on to describe the retreat as a sure anchor).

"After making the retreat I got the courage to confess my faith; and here in the barracks I stick

* For more recent figures, see Appendix.

up for it whenever I can, because *since the days at Viersen my faith seems a splendid thing*. They are a glorious institution."

"I have made a firm resolution to give in my name whenever the order is given, 'Volunteers for church service.' Before the retreat I was for years careless about hearing Mass. Now I am very glad to get the opportunity of doing so."

"I will visit a church as often as I can, and at all times confess my faith openly and frankly, even when laughed at. I find that people no longer mock me for my faith."

"Now we see that prayer is as necessary for us as our swords."

Letters of this kind might be multiplied indefinitely. A note of sincerity and manliness runs through them all. The men have gained in character, and they have gained in happiness. They have got a new outlook on life.

Parish priests, military chaplains, and others bear witness to the wonderful results produced by these retreats. These retreats to recruits are no mere spiritual coddling, no hot-house piety. The men are braced up and shown what dangers they have to face. They are not given mere vague generalities. It may be mentioned that on one of the afternoons during the retreat the chair of the priest is occupied by an eminent and experienced Catholic doctor who tells the young men something about the dangers and temptations which they will have to face during their term of service.

We have something to learn, then, from Germany. A policy of blood and iron cannot make men of iron. But retreats are making men of steel. It is frequently said that Englishmen are losing their grit. If this be so, retreats will help them to recover it. And just as the German recruit goes to make a retreat before starting on his new way of life, so should Catholics in this country fortify themselves by a retreat before taking any momentous step which will bring them, so to speak, into fresh country. A young man starting business or getting married or entering on new fields of work should first take his bearings in a retreat and prepare to meet whatever the future may bring. Not that retreats should be limited to such occasions as these; for the man whose life is spent in humdrum monotony needs his annual retreat to save him from spiritual stagnation. He needs to brighten up his Catholic ideals and stiffen his will. We are all in a sense recruits, for life is a long battle with forces which tend to drag us down and blind us to the supernatural, and we have to be ever learning our elementary drill afresh. The world may harden us—but that is not the kind of hardness we want. There is nothing attractive about the hardness of cynicism or of despair. We need the supple hardness of steel, and this will be given us in a retreat. For in a retreat we borrow strength from God.

The German Jesuits have just built a magnificent retreat-house at 'S Heerenberg, near Emmerich, a short distance from the east bank of the Rhine. The retreat-house is on the German side of the town, and a brook at the bottom of the garden is actually the frontier. Here, as at Feldkirch and elsewhere, the house forms one block with a novitiate, and the novices not only edify the retreat-makers (and vice versa) but polish their boots and make themselves generally useful.

The foundation-stone was laid on 11th May, the feast of St Francis Jerome, 1909. The building of the house was viewed with equal enthusiasm by the Dutch and German neighbours. It was a happy thought to choose St Boniface for the chief patron and Blessed Peter Canisius for the second, for both are a link between the Dutch and German inhabitants. The former, the great Apostle of Germany—too little known and honoured perhaps in his native England—worked in these parts with St Willibrord, before he evangelised the Germans, and eventually returned thither to seal his faith with his blood; while Blessed Peter Canisius was a native of Nijwegen, in the immediate neighbourhood; and the whole district owes its tremendous Catholicity not least to him.

The house was blessed on 18th October, 1910, by the Dutch Archbishop of Utrecht and the German Bishop of Fulda. After speech-

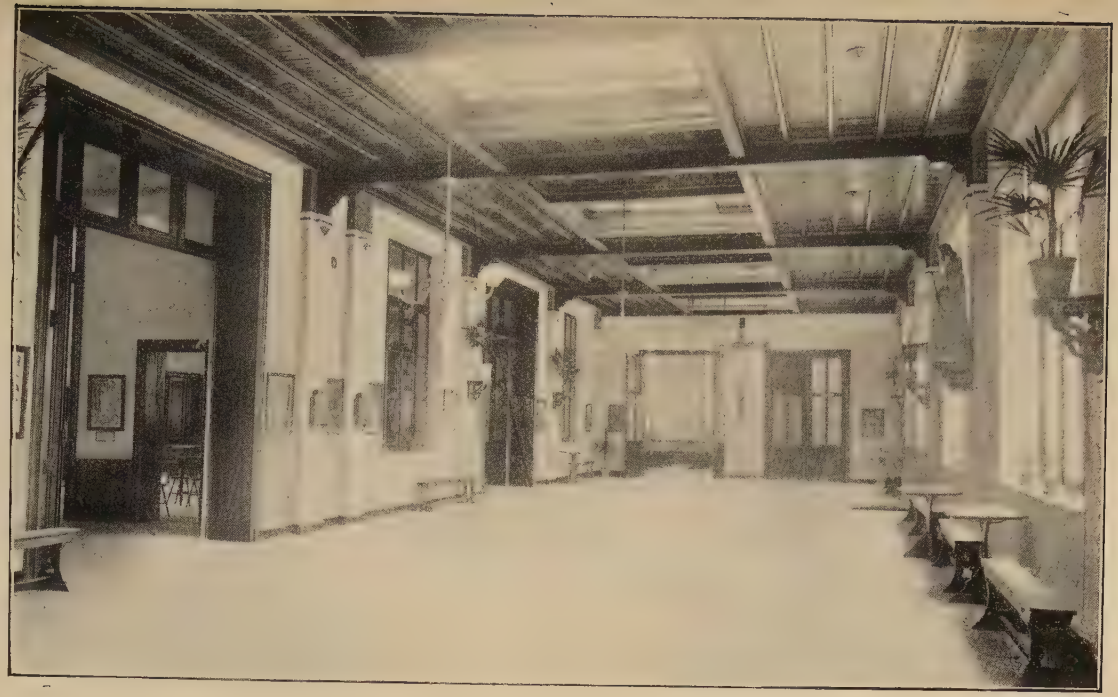
making and banqueting came a procession with six hundred torches, the crowd numbering about six thousand.

A good idea of the house may be got from the accompanying illustration. For its main plan it largely follows the retreat-house and novitiate near Feldkirch. House and grounds are divided into two parts: one for the retreat-makers, the others for the novices. The front of the house is eighty-five metres in length; the south (right) wing eighty-four metres; the north (left) wing, which is the retreat-house proper, sixty metres. The latter contains eighty-seven private rooms, besides chapel, conference-room and refectory. The whole building cost about £41,500, apart from the site and the grounds. Inside, the building is at once practical and imposing, and the chapels are works of art.

Retreats are given to groups of men and youths from the educated classes, including teachers, university students, etc. The working men of Germany are already provided for nearer home, as we have seen.

Retreats for university students and the older boys in the *gymnasia*, as well as for clerks, etc., are also provided at Aalbeck, near Valkenburg, during the Easter and summer vacations. The house hitherto used for the purpose is now being considerably enlarged.

Mention must be made of the retreat-house



ALKEN (See p. 82).

[*To face p.* 96.

at Feldkirch (Vorarlberg) to which so many priests and laymen annually repair—or resort for repair. In 1903, for instance, the numbers were seven hundred and ninety-six priests, one thousand and nineteen laymen. In 1906 the first retreat was given to working men, ninety-four of whom assembled from Austria, Switzerland, Baden, Bavaria and Würtemburg. The impression made upon them was remarkable. "I am sixty years old," said one of them, "but I have never in my life had such good fortune as this nor felt so happy."

Some details may now be given of the popular retreat movement in Spain. To many it will come as a surprise that such retreats exist. Their picture of Spain is formed of sensational scraps provided by the special correspondents of our newspapers. Of the political dissensions and ineptitudes of Spanish Catholics they have heard much; of the solid piety, splendid faith and high morality of those same Catholics they know little. Yet the spirit of St Teresa, of St John of the Cross, and of St Ignatius is strong in Spain to-day—and half a dozen retreat-houses are doing much to foster it. Many of them are of quite recent formation; yet they are producing results with the like of which we are now familiar.

At Sarriá (a suburb of Barcelona) a branch of the Sodality established a retreat-house a few years ago and established a committee to ad-

minister it. Another committee (of ladies) was formed to secure the necessary funds. In 1910 the house was enlarged and refitted. During the previous three years retreats had been given to over seven hundred men.

This retreat-house is intended exclusively for the use of working men. The retreats last for three days and the men have all their expenses paid for them. This last arrangement is common in Spain and Italy. Local circumstances may make it desirable and even necessary; but while we admire the generosity of those who furnish entirely free retreats for the working classes (and even pay their travelling expenses and their wages during the three days) it would not seem to be desirable to imitate the method, at least in this country. Men commonly set a higher value on what has cost them something; and the feeling of healthy independence and increased self-respect which results from paying one's way is worth preserving.

The retreat-house at Valentia (La Purisima) was projected in 1904. During the first two years two hundred and sixty-six working men made retreats there. A committee of gentlemen superintends the finances and collects subscriptions.

A bright little retreat-house at Puerto de Sta Maria, Cadiz, called *La Inmaculada*, holds about thirty workmen. It is built amid plantations by the sea, and the men may make their

meditations on the beach. Finest of all the houses is that at Durango, near Loyola. It is attached to a magnificent church, on the other side of which is a school. This house was built in 1907 and accommodates fifty men. Retreats are also given elsewhere—Gandia, Tarragona, Tortosa, etc.

"Regional Retreats," or "Flying Retreats," such as we have seen in France, are coming into vogue elsewhere. Thus the Archpriest at Albaida (near Valencia) writes in enthusiastic strains of a series of retreats organised in that town during February and March, 1911. No regular retreat-house existed, but temporary accommodation had been provided in the schools and part of the hospital. The retreats were all given by one man—Padre Iñesta. To give eight five-day retreats in immediate succession to companies of over two hundred men or women must have proved a somewhat exhausting experience.

The people went through their retreats in a very satisfactory and thorough fashion. In spite of rain, which necessitated their stopping in their somewhat confined dwellings, they kept silence admirably. Some of the men underwent voluntary penance of a somewhat severe character. ("Ugh! mind my shoulder," cried the father of a family when vigorously hugged on his return home by his children. It was not rheumatism this time.)

The Archpriest gives many examples of quite remarkable conversions effected during these retreats. He tells us that blasphemy has quite gone out of fashion in the district and that all pernicious literature is rigorously banished. There has been a great increase in attendance at the Sacraments, and family life has shown a marked improvement. Here, again, the outward expressions and manifestations of reform are often picturesque. The father of a family returns home after the retreat, begs pardon of his wife for all his shortcomings and promises a new start. "Let us pretend we have just been married!" He then produces a rosary and a switch, and announces to the family that the rosary will henceforth be said daily in common by the family, and that the switch will be administered to him who sleeps or forgets to bring his rosary. Thus symbolically, by birch and beads, the family is reminded to watch and pray.

The young men came out well in these retreats, as young men so often do. Proud and shy and defiant, they are encouraged in a retreat to "seem as generous as they are," and to master their paralysing fear of one another. Religion suddenly becomes to them a splendid field of enterprise and adventure. The retreat opens the gate—yet does not hustle them through.*

* "In following the *Exercises* the mind is made to act throughout, and to work out its own resolutions. Nothing is imposed on us by others, either through per-

Instead of receiving a horrified scolding for their misdemeanours (a process which would leave them in mulish obstinacy) they are just put where they can see how contemptible their cubbishness has been. Bounderism loses its glamour. More serious faults—such as disloyalty to their faith—fill them with rage against themselves. And so at Albaida, as sometimes elsewhere, we find dramatic but entirely unrehearsed effects in the way of public self-accusation. A stalwart young man, for instance, stands up just before the giving of the Papal blessing, which closes the retreat, and calls out: "Look here, you fellows, the other day I distributed anti-Catholic literature after a public meeting"—or words to that effect. He is commendingly thumped upon the back by his neighbours.

These retreats closed with a strange scene of enthusiasm. Father Iñesta had resolved to slip away quietly at five o'clock in the morning after the last retreat, and thus avoid speechmaking.

suasion or by authority. We are made to think, to conclude, to determine, and to act, by a process essentially our own; so that there is no escape, and no danger from the reaction of self-love. No influence has been used, further than to guide rightly the exercise of our own powers; and even that direction has been given to us with our eyes open, and under the full conviction that we cannot shrink from a single step, without going against reason and conscience."—*Cardinal Wiseman* (extract from the Preface to Seager's edition of the *Exercises*. London: Dolman, 1847).

But the people had got wind of his intention. At four o'clock men were going round from house to house and rousing the sleeping inhabitants: "Get up, the Father is going to the train." Get up they did, in spite of the torrents of rain; and in a few minutes six hundred men with lanterns were splashing through the darkness and the mud in hastily improvised procession. Every man of the escort must kiss the Padre's hand on the platform; and there is a band to play the Royal March as the train steams out amid cheers.

Popular retreats have also been revived to some extent in Italy, though we here miss the thoroughness of organisation which has given such a marked impetus to the movement in Belgium and Germany.

In 1907 a retreat was given to thirty men in a house near Chieri borrowed for the purpose. This was followed by a second retreat to fifty men. In 1908 five retreats were given to two hundred and ten men. Meanwhile the Superior of the Christian Brothers had kindly offered the use of a fine house near Turin, the Villa Nicolas, standing on the top of a hill and surrounded by woods.

In 1909 retreats for workmen were started at Bergamo. The Bishop put at their service the old house known as the *Paradiso*, which had long been used for clergy retreats. This example was soon followed at Milan, where the

Jesuits made use of their villa for the purpose. Popular retreats in Rome are not yet organised on anything like the scale which might be anticipated, though occasional retreats are given in various colleges and religious houses, and the last two years have witnessed a very promising start in the matter of retreats for workmen. Ten retreats have been given to about three hundred men, and it is now proposed to build a regular retreat-house for working men near St Peter's.

These Italian retreats conform to the type with which we are by this time familiar. They are made by thirty or forty men, and last for three days. The meditations follow the *Exercises* closely, but instructions on the social and other questions which intimately affect the lives of the working classes are also given during the retreat, though usually in a separate hall and not in the chapel. The work of eradicating prejudices from the minds of simple and somewhat muddle-headed workmen is not easy. They have battened on inflammatory newspapers and become coloured by the cheap objections against religion which they meet with amongst their fellow-workmen. To teach such men to think for themselves requires endless patience. But there is plenty of goodwill; and the result of a hearty confession and communion is to calm the volcanic passions and put order into life, thus preparing the mind for the quiet and reasonable consideration of social problems.

The work of recruiting for the retreats is carried on with some ingenuity. It is realised that the workman himself makes the best apostle of workmen. Where no nucleus of apostolic working men exists steps are taken to form one. A lantern lecture or an address is announced on some social topic of general interest. Some of the more intelligent men are asked to speak about it during the dinner hour to the rest. An audience is secured, which in time becomes a clientele. Interest is gradually awakened and a point of contact secured. Finally, the idea of a retreat is broached. The retreat once made, the nucleus is secured.

Here, as elsewhere, all who have seen the effects of the retreats become their warm champions. The Archbishops of Turin and Milan and the Bishop of Bergamo take a particular interest in the work and have written cordial letters of encouragement. Other Bishops are seeking to establish retreats in their respective dioceses, and the secular clergy, who have witnessed the results already obtained, support the work by every means in their power.

Retreats are being revived in Sicily where, as we have seen, they flourished long ago. In 1892 a series of retreats was given by Father Mangione, S.J., to seven hundred and eighty working men in a Capuchin friary at Alcamo. This was the first attempt of the kind in Sicily

for a generation. The experiment was not followed up until March, 1910, when a fresh start was made at Bagheria, near Palermo, of which some account may be given.*

The project at the outset was warmly blessed by Cardinal Lualdi, who, moreover, testified to his approbation by the practical method of sending a subscription. For a house the Jesuit villa, *Palazzo Celso* was secured. For the purchase of furniture for fifty rooms benefactions were invited and obtained. The first retreat was fixed for the 19th, 20th, and 21st March, thus auspiciously opening on the feast of St Joseph.

Preparations for the securing of the men were set on foot early—but not too early, as was afterwards admitted. Only experience can show the amount of trouble that must be taken in recruiting if the retreats are to have their full effect. Not that there was any lack of men ready to come: the whole difficulty was to make the selection.

The methods of selection were wise. It was important to strike the right note at the beginning and to secure those who would be likely to keep that note resounding in the labour world to some effect. So youthful applicants were told to wait till later on, and a bid was made for those fathers of families who pos-

* For a brightly written description of this enterprise see *Esercizi Spirituali agli Operai di Bagheria.* Messina, 1910.

sessed the most influence among their fellows. Various workmen's organisations were approached—the *Lega Co-operativa Picconieri*, the *Circolo Democratico*, the *Circolo Leone XIII.*, and other auspiciously named bodies—and recruits were selected from among the committees and leading members.

A priest director, two scholastics, and two lay-brothers, took up their quarters at the *Palazzo Celso* a few days before the retreat, and proceeded to get the house ready, unpacking furniture, fixing up beds, and so on. At last all was ready, and on the afternoon of the 18th, the little staff watched at the windows in a flutter of anxiety for the first arrivals. "Would anybody come? Would the men's courage fail at the last moment?" At last, after many false alarms and the mistaking of sundry harmless and ordinary pedestrians for arriving retreat-makers, a conveyance drove up to the *Palazzo* containing seven pioneers, appropriately enough all members of the *Lega Co-operativa Picconieri.* Suspense was at an end, and the new arrivals were greeted with fervour.*

* Waiting for the first retreat-maker in a new house is always described as an anxious process by rash people who start retreat-houses. "We fairly fell upon the neck of the first workmen who arrived," said another pioneer-director. "Never was a plumber received with such joy. Had our boiler burst and our cistern sprung a leak our welcome could not have been warmer"—or words to that effect.

Shortly afterwards the whole contingent had arrived—indeed more than had been expected, for some had brought friends. To those polite hints were given that they could not be put up this time. But they begged to remain. "We will sleep on the stairs if need be." Finally accommodation was found for the whole number—fifty-one.

The men strolled round the house and soon discovered a printed order of the day. One of them read it out aloud for the benefit of the rest, who listened with slowly-dropping jaws. "Anyhow we shan't have time to be bored," was the comment of one. Others made remarks which the chronicler describes as *poco parlamentari*.

The next surprise for the men came at supper-time, when they found themselves being waited on by clerics. One or two rose from their places in protest, and had to be asked to sit down again. Even so their qualms were not wholly allayed for some time. One man assured his parish priest afterwards that he could scarcely swallow his *maccaroni*.

Then came a visit to the chapel, where a lusty *Veni Creator* served as prelude to the first instruction. This was followed by night prayers and bed. Next morning the retreat began in earnest.

By the second day the *Exercises* had left their mark. One of the Fathers, seeing a friend

of his, a young painter, among the retreat-makers, looking preternaturally solemn, asked how he liked the retreat. The answer came in sepulchral tones:

"I know why I am in the world."

"Why, didn't you know it before?" asked the priest.

"No, I didn't know it."

Every day there was a "social conference," at which the men were invited to ask questions and ventilate their views. These conferences were followed with the keenest interest; and the men were shown how to link up their religion with the rest of their lives.

On the third day there was a meditation on death. Soon after this meditation the bell rang for dinner—but no one put in an appearance. A Father went to the Chapel to search for the men. He found them kneeling there in prayer, the faces of some of them streaming with tears. Coming up to one of them, a fisherman, he touched him on the shoulder saying that it was time for dinner.

"We have got to die!" murmured the fisherman without any signs of moving.

"Well, we shall die better after dinner," said the priest cheerfully.

The fisherman rose and the rest followed; but it was a solemn meal. It was noticed that the young men in particular were shaken by this vivid realisation of death.

On the last evening there was a distribution of pious objects—and of cigars. At supper the long silence was declared to be at an end, the result being the torrent of talk usual after a retreat, and contrasting so strikingly with the somewhat glum taciturnity of the first arrival. The men are now all bubbling over with benevolence, and each is explaining to his neighbour what a surprising time it has been, and how he was very nearly not coming, and what a calamity it would have been to have missed it.

The next morning came another familiar scene—the protracted leave-taking. The men would shake hands vigorously with the Fathers, and then go back to their rooms to see that nothing was left behind—and then of course they had to shake hands again with renewed assurances that they would come back. It took hours to get some of them finally off the premises. The place had been to them the scene of a deep and precious spiritual experience—and they could scarcely bring themselves to leave it.

Two months later they were all back again to spend the day at the retreat-house—this time with a host of comrades. It was not the feast of a Saint that brought them back, but, significantly enough, Labour Day. With a fine Catholic instinct the men resolved to consecrate the first of May by spending it on the scene of their spiritual awakening. Instead of an idle

demonstration they would hold a "social day" at the *Palazzo Celso*. That would be the best service they could render to the cause of Christian labour.

So mustering at five o'clock in the morning they marched with a brave show of banners to the retreat-house. The day was a great success: it concluded with a stirring address on Labour Organisation by the President of the *Circolo Democratico*. He spoke of the enthusiasm which had sprung up amongst them during the three days of the retreat, and of their firm resolve to consecrate all their efforts to the propagation of Christian ideas. They would be apostles, standard-bearers of Christ in the labour world.

Nor was this a mere passing emotion. The effects of the retreat are already visible in a renewal of Christian family life, in a concerted campaign against a corrupt press and in the more definitely Catholic tone given to economic and social institutions. An organisation for the purpose of extending these retreats and perpetuating their good results is in course of formation.

CHAPTER VI

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

When it was first proposed to start a permanent house of retreats in England there was the usual chorus of discouragement. The men could not come, they would not come, it would do them no good if they did, the expense was too great, and so on.

A little patient inquiry showed that all these objections were entirely worthless. A little investigation of what was going on in Belgium and elsewhere kindled enthusiasm among a few. A paper at a Catholic conference, a pamphlet or two; a steady stream of articles in the Catholic Press, a resolute buttonholing of likely clerics and laymen—with these the interest grew. People began at least to listen without impatience. But something more than talk is necessary, and at this point Providence sent the man. While others were discussing the pros and cons (more particularly the cons) Father Edward Buckland, S.J., was looking about for a suitable house.

The house was found, Compstall Hall, Marple, near Manchester—a fine stone house

with fifteen acres of ground. Father Buckland took possession on the feast of St Joseph, 1908. The Holy Father hastened to bless the *salutare consilium* the news of which brought joy to his heart. We are reminded of that encouragement by the beautiful golden chalice which that same Holy Father presented with his special blessing to the Hall, and which has so often been uplifted before the reverent gaze of the men who came to Compstall to be built up again. The late Bishop of Shrewsbury, even during the sufferings of his last illness, roused himself to record his conviction "that it is a most excellent project, and one calculated to do an enormous amount of good in this country." The Bishop of Salford, too, wrote of his great joy at the realisation of a project which he had so long at heart, and hoped "that a large number from this diocese will avail themselves of the opportunities you afford at Marple." The Bishop of Nottingham wrote: "A thousand blessings from my heart, and a thousand thanks. It is a splendid idea, and I pray it may bear—as it should—an abundance of fruit." The Bishop of Liverpool: "I think your idea of workmen's retreats an excellent one, and should do much good." The Father-General of the Society of Jesus sent the following message: "I cannot think of any work which may be more for the glory of God, the good of the Church, and the salvation of souls."

VENLO, HOLLAND (See p. 84).

[*To face p.* 112.

We can scarcely wonder that expectation ran high as a result of such encouraging words as these. But expectation was left hopelessly behind by achievement.

The following account of Compstall Hall, its visitors, and its purpose, is taken from an article in the *Spectator* for 17th October, 1908:

"The house is Early Victorian of the stodgiest variety. As you climb the long, wooded drive from the lodge, the stone porch is fairly terrific with its pillar and carving and general suggestion of expensive weight. One can almost reconstruct the original owner—surely a prosperous merchant, complacently substantial, and lavish of entertainment. His dining-room seats fifty guests, and his ballroom, with its alabaster fireplace and unabashed ceiling, must have made his heart expand. We cannot imagine 'defiance in his eye,' for he had feathered his nest unthwarted; but 'pride in his port' may be assumed from the loving attention manifested in the construction of the cellars. He had an eye for a site. His grounds slope down southward to a river, and command a valley which is still beautiful, though Manchester be but ten miles distant. The garden is delightful: orchards and roseries, stone summer-houses and wooded walks, all so secluded and elusive as to make ten acres seem fifty. With what eye, we wonder, would he view the present purpose of the house? Every week it is visited by a score or more of working men, who spend three or four days of welcome change from mill and factory, delighting

in the fresh air and the garden, and taking a discreet holiday of the most unconventional kind, known to the initiated as a 'retreat.' Workmen predominate, but men from every class of society may be found there. The spirit of *camaraderie* is incredible. That these men enjoy themselves cannot be doubted. Yet they spend much of the time in prayer and silence. The cellars are empty, and the ballroom is a chapel where some eighteen discourses on the deepest things of life are given to willing ears within four days (Thursday nights to Monday mornings). It seems at first blush to recall Sydney Smith's idea of supreme torture,—'being preached to death by wild curates.' Yet, I repeat, the men enjoy it. They pay for their keep, and will travel over half England to be present. For some it is the only holiday of the year; but it is declared to be 'worth a week at Blackpool.'

"Eighteen sermons and much silence and prayer! Yet these are British workmen. One might imagine a steady *crescendo* of boredom, culminating in flight about the third morning. The contrary is the case. The first morning may perhaps show a certain restlessness, a slight irritation at the forcing of the old life into new channels. But on the second day all goes smoothly. On the third the men have so completely settled down to the semi-monastic life that it becomes almost difficult to get them to go when the fourth morning arrives. One may be sure of seeing them there the following year. The truth is, of course, that the three days which seem spent in mere listening, and which, in comparison with the

Blackpool trip, appear so devoid of interest, are really crammed with activities beyond all previous experience. The eighteen sermons are, in fact, not sermons at all. They are what is technically known as 'points.' The men themselves do the real work; the preacher performs the functions of a drill-sergeant. His talk is not at random, but follows the code of that discerning soldier, Ignatius, of Loyola, who can take a man's soul and fashion it to self-command, enterprise, ardour, with supreme insight and sureness of touch. His book of the 'Spiritual Exercises' yields little or nothing to the casual reader. It must be lived rather than read; and if the working man can be induced to live it for three days, he will face life in quite a new spirit. 'The *Exercises* of St Ignatius,' says Mrs Craigie in 'Robert Orange,' 'exhort us to hope, action, courage. They make one a citizen of both worlds. . . . . I defy any man to go through the *Exercises* with his whole heart and ever whine again.' "

The first retreat opened on 21st May, and was attended by fourteen men, including a carpenter, a bricklayer, a painter, some mill hands, a solicitor's clerk, a postmaster, and an alderman. The retreat was a triumphant success, and all the pioneers were delighted.

After a short time, thanks to Father Buckland's unfailing energy and powers of organisation, it became possible to have retreats every week. A halt was called for alterations and improvements during the winter months, but

the retreats began again in the spring of 1909, and ran fairly continuously until the autumn. By that time some six hundred and seventy men had made retreats at Compstall Hall. These figures by no means represent the actual number of applications. Often enough, especially in the summer months, two, three, or even four times as many names were sent in as could be accepted. Space was limited, especially in the matter of sleeping accommodation. Twenty-six was a tight fit. But what of the results actually obtained? Well, to record them would be to write a series of spiritual romances—or what may be taken for such. Their full extent is known only to God. Yet the work blossomed out, as God's works do, into manifestations which bring gladness to the hearts of those who watch for the coming of His Kingdom.

Perhaps the best way to give some slight indication of these results will be to select a few passages from the hundreds—literally hundreds—of letters which have been written spontaneously by those who have made these retreats. "The photographs (writes one) will remind me of three of the happiest and most profitable days of my life. I had no idea what a retreat was. All men who possess the Faith ought to make a retreat at least once a year—what a different world we should have. One seems to live an entirely new life. I hope to

revisit you very often, and I shall do all I can to induce others to come."

The above extract is typical. The man has had an astonishingly good time, he intends to come again, and he will bring others. That is the gist of it, and the same theme occurs with variations in most of the letters. It is worth while stopping to consider what these statements imply.

The men all confess to being astonished. They simply had no idea of what a retreat would do for them. They did not know that it would open up quite new horizons and give the world a different colour. They are amazed at their good fortune, and full of a dazed kind of gratitude. Listen, for instance, to the following striking passage from another letter: "Not only were they the three happiest days I have ever spent in succession, but it has been a continual feast ever since. The amount of graces and blessings I have received are many; of course I have had crosses as well, and many; but I have been fortified with the right spirit which is the result of attending the retreat at Compstall Hall. . . . The scenes and pictures that were placed before us are continually before my eyes, which make the continual feast I have spoken of. . . ." This man has got to the root of the matter. The retreat was not a mere passing experience, but the opening out of a new life.

The second point to notice is that the men

declare their intention of coming again. And come they do. Compstall Hall during its second year of existence welcomed many of those who had visited it during the first year. "I am looking forward to coming again next year," is the constant refrain. The memory of a retreat endures.

Thirdly, they say that they will bring others with them. They have discovered a good thing and will tell their friends about it. "If everyone knew about it, everyone would come," is the common sentiment of those who have made a retreat. The men feel that everyone ought to know about it: they learn in a retreat that the Catholic religion is not a thing to be locked up in the recesses of the individual breast. It is a social religion and can heal society as well as individuals. The world's miseries would be assuaged and its injustices rectified if men would hearken to the Catholic Church. It brings good tidings, and any man with a scrap of right feeling will set himself to spread those tidings.

There are many other extracts from these letters which one is tempted to quote—extracts full of spiritual beauty and deep feeling. One man speaks of "that home of grace known to the world as Compstall Hall, but to our Catholic hearts as the store-house of God's love for men." Others give glimpses of a broken life mended, of hopelessness transformed into strong

hope: "I hope many lonely and suffering souls will find at Compstall Hall the relief and happiness I have found there myself."

Others find it quite impossible to put into words the feelings which stir them. Their broken sentences are perhaps the most touching of all: "I am simply overwhelmed with joy and admiration, after this, my first retreat. I cannot express myself, for I think it would be impossible to voice my feelings." That is what the men thought of their retreat. But what did those who give the retreats think of the men? The following words used by one of them may be taken as typical of the rest: "It has been a sight edifying beyond expression to see these men gather together in the beautiful and secluded grounds of Compstall Hall going through the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius with a zeal and fervour which might put many a Religious to the blush."

In a paper read before the Manchester Branch of the Catholic Truth Society, Father Buckland gave his impressions of the first year's work at Compstall Hall. After quoting from letters written by working men who had made retreats, he continued:

"These spontaneous testimonies of gratitude and pleasure have been matter for consolation and encouragement for all concerned in the work. They make one feel that here at last is a chance of getting hold of our working classes, of sanctifying

them, and of turning them into apostles amongst their fellow-men. That indeed is the fundamental idea of the whole scheme—the formation in every parish of an élite—a body of men thoroughly well instructed in the practice as in the theory of their Faith—full of zeal and fervour, ready at all times to act as a sort of bodyguard to the clergy: men on whom they can count in time of trial, willing to co-operate in harmony with them, and under their guidance, in all good works making for the advancement of the cause of Christ. The experience of the past year has taught me what was probably known to many before—that we have in this country, and especially in the north, a large body of intelligent and active working men, who, if they are only formed and guided, are capable of doing a vast amount towards realising the ideal of our Holy Father, 'restoring all things in Christ.' The men have come in large numbers, they have submitted it in a most edifying manner to a rather severe Order of the day; they have shown themselves well capable of making good, solid, fruitful meditations, and have gone home delighted with their experiences. It is rather beside the purpose to give any of the incidents which have come under my own observation in connection with the exercitants, though I could tell much that would deeply edify, and some things that would amuse you. I can only say I have not yet met a single case of one who regretted having come. Most—nearly all, in fact—look back upon the three days spent in the seclusion of Compstall Hall as the three happiest days of their lives.

"What, moreover, one must look upon as matter of great consolation and encouragement is the spontaneous nature of the applications for places. During the past three months, despite the great difficulties of anything like an organised system of advertising and of bringing home to the working classes the nature and aim of the retreats, we have had over two hundred and twenty applications, of which eighty per cent have been direct from the men themselves, without any pressure or persuasion on the part of their parish priests. Our first retreat started on 21st May with what might be called a scratch team of fourteen, collected from various North Lancashire towns. Since then we have had nine retreats attended by over a hundred and forty men. These exercitants have come from all parts of England. London, Southampton, Brighton, Norwich in the south; Birmingham, Bilston, Tunstall in the Midlands; Barnsley, Bradford, Durham, Carlisle, South Shields, Barrow-in-Furness in the north; Liverpool, New Brighton, Birkenhead in the west, have all been represented, though naturally enough a great bulk have come from the large industrial centres in Lancashire and Cheshire. Then we have had representatives of almost all classes—merchants, shopkeepers, clerks, postmasters, carpenters, painters, coopers, gardeners, farmers, potters, tinsmiths, mill hands, and even professional football players. All ages, moreover, have been represented, from the veteran of sixty to the lad of sixteen. Thus if we can look back with consolation, we can also look forward with hope."

Towards the end of 1909 it became evident

that the house of Compstall which, two years before, had seemed so ambitiously large was in reality much too small to meet the growing demands made upon it. The Catholics and especially the working men of the north of England had shown their approval of the retreats in a most practical fashion. They came for more and brought their friends with them. Providentially (there is surely a special providence over retreat-houses) there had come into the market the very place that was required—Oakwood Hall, Romiley, to which the reader may now be introduced.

Romiley is the next station to Marple, and Oakwood Hall is not far from Romiley Station. We turn to the left on leaving the station and pass under a railway bridge. Then we take the first turning to the right, along Oakwood road, and pass through a tunnel. Four minutes more walking brings us to the stone lodge of Oakwood Hall.

There is no sign of the house. All we see is a drive stretching along to the right. Anyhow, we are in the grounds. The drive is about four hundred yards long, and lined with choice shrubs and trees, each bearing its description stamped on a metal label. But we must not stop to botanise, or we shall be late for supper. Suddenly the drive broadens into a large open space. In the centre is a trim lawn, as smooth as that of an Oxford College. In front is a

stone-built block of bedrooms; to the left, snugly placed among the trees, is the house. Instinctively you stop and stare. Instead of the low and somewhat gloomy building of Compstall, with its heavy stone porch, you see a much finer building of light stone, with great mullioned windows and a graceful stone tower, hexagonal and pinnacled, springing up to a height of some sixty feet. There is a spacious porch about fifteen feet in height, divided by a carved stone pillar. On one side of the house is a great tent-shaped conservatory, where fifty men might smoke their pipes in comfort. The lines of the house are varied and graceful, the style being modern Gothic; everywhere we see tall mullioned windows and springing pinnacles. Our allegiance to Compstall Hall is shattered! This is the place for a retreat.

Passing into the hall, with its elaborate carved and painted roof, we see that no less care has been taken with the interior of the house. The panelled ceilings of the refectory and chapel are works of art. The rooms are lofty and handsome. But the greatest surprise comes when we look out of the windows. We had no notion that we were at such a height, or that such a magnificent panorama could be seen within a few miles of Manchester. We find that the house is perched on a lofty brow, its wooded grounds sloping sheer down to the river beneath us. Stretching away across the

valley as far as the eye can see are bold hills or undulating downs.

Yes, this is the place for a retreat! From our garden terraces we seem to see the world. Yet we are raised far above it, and the silence is unbroken. We are well out of the noise and tumult, and can take stock of it calmly and dispassionately. The river immediately below us is hidden by our woods, but far away to right and left we get a glimpse of tumbling waters. They come swirling out of dark woods to our left; they go foaming into dark woods to our right. It is a picture of man's life—coming out of one mystery and vanishing into another. Straight across the valley, perched on a high hill in the distance, stands a factory. At such distance it loses its ugliness and actuality, and becomes a mere symbol of man's restless absorption in the present—of the harassed materialism of modern life and the crude lack of ideals which so often comes to mark the man of middle age. For the mill is midway in the landscape between the place where the river breaks into view and the place where it disappears. From our height we see that life, like the landscape, is not all mill. The mill is not the last word on the subject; we have to discover the mystery of the river of life—to learn the whence and the whither.

The grounds, which have been beautifully laid-out regardless of expense by a former

owner, cover forty acres, and provide an abundance of secluded walks which invite meditation. The house accommodates about forty men at a time, and it is proposed to add on a few more rooms. Roughly, about a thousand men made retreats at Oakwood Hall during the two years which followed the opening of the house. Now that it has been enlarged and is to be enlarged further, we may anticipate a considerable increase in the number of retreat-makers. The house is its own best advertisement. Those who have been once, almost invariably return the following years. It must be noted that the retreats are not exclusively for working men but are also organised for professional and business men, men of leisure, and the middle classes. It is hoped that, as time goes on, a large number of retreats may be organised for special classes and groups of Catholic men, such as conferences of the Society of St Vincent de Paul (which have supported the movement with such enthusiasm abroad), branches of the Sodality, clubs and guilds and societies, Catholic representatives of the various professions, trades, occupations. It is a great advantage for men whose life-work lies in the same field to meet together on the common ground of their Catholic faith and to consider the peculiar difficulties and opportunities which confront them. Such retreats for particular groups are particu-

larly effective, as experience shows. They infuse a fresh current of spiritual life and enthusiasm into the class or society or district represented.

The charge for board and lodging at Oakwood Hall during the three full days (four nights) of retreat is twelve shillings and sixpence. This, of course, scarcely does more than cover the mere cost of the food provided, without diminishing the heavy debt upon the house or meeting the various heavy expenses which so large an establishment entails. To cover these and to provide for further enlargement, it is necessary to look to benefactors.*

The success of this northern retreat-house led to a widespread desire that a similar house should be opened near London. At the end of the summer of 1911 a large mansion (Thornbury House, Spring Grove) was found at Isleworth, commanding a fine view of the beautiful country on all sides. The immediate neighbourhood is well wooded, and the grounds include three and a half acres of gardens with trim lawns and well-grown trees. The privacy of the gardens which are behind the house and the air of repose of the whole neighbourhood

* Contributions will be gratefully accepted by the Rev. E. H. Buckland, Oakwood Hall, Romiley, Cheshire. It may here be mentioned that the dates of the retreats are published on the front page of the *Catholic Times*.

make it an almost ideal place for retreats. It is, moreover, easily accessible from all sides.*

It is hoped that retreats may be started in the spring of 1912, and accommodation will at first be made for twenty visitors, the number being increased to forty as time goes on. The retreats will be arranged to meet the spiritual needs of all classes of men, except perhaps those who are already well provided for at Manresa House, Roehampton.

One great source of hope for the ultimate success of this venture is the general friendliness of the secular clergy, who have already taken great interest in the work and given most valuable aid. Particularly encouraging has been the warm welcome extended to it by the Archbishop of Westminster and the Bishop of Southwark.

Thornbury House has been put under the patronage of Blessed Edmund Campion who, on his way to London and to martyrdom, passed quite close to where the house stands.

Although houses devoted to the sole purpose of retreats for laymen are of recent introduction

* The District Railways' station, which connects Spring Grove with all parts of London, is only three minutes' walk from the house. On the L. & S.W. there are frequent trains from Waterloo and Clapham Junction to Isleworth, which is thus accessible from the south of England. From the west come Great Western trains to Brentford, met by trams to Thornbury Road.

in England, such retreats have, as all know, been occasionally given at various centres. Retreats for professional and business men and the leisured classes have long been given at some of the religious houses, and to these we must add the retreats for "old boys," so popular at several Catholic colleges. More recently has been introduced the custom of giving occasional retreats for working men. Thus, in 1905, the Bishop of Southwark suggested to the nuns of *La Retraite* in Atkins Road, Balham, that a house belonging to them should be used for such retreats on the August bank holiday and the two days preceding it—the men coming on the previous Friday evening. These August retreats at Balham are now deservedly popular. The house (which was purchased by the nuns from the late Dan Leno) is entirely detached from the convent, and is used during the rest of the year as a high school. It has half an acre of garden and an adjoining field of two acres.

Retreats for men are conducted at several centres by the Redemptorist Fathers—an Order which has played a very distinguished part in the history of popular retreats. We have already recalled the enthusiasm of St Alphonsus Ligouri for this form of apostolate, and noticed the success which is attending the Redemptorist retreats in Holland.

A retreat was given at Norden, near Roch-

EMMERICH (See p. 95).

[*To face p.* 128.

dale, in August 1908 to a number of Catholic laymen, and it was hoped that a regular series of such retreats might follow. But unfortunately the house had to be given up and the promising experiment was thus brought to an end.

But, by way of compensation, efforts are being made to work up these retreats again at the Redemptorist house at Bishop Eton, Liverpool. They had lapsed for some years owing to lack of space occasioned by the hospitality extended to French exiled students belonging to the Order.

The latest development of Redemptorist retreats has been the opening of a house for the purpose near London in 1911. Bishops Stortford can be reached from Liverpool Street in three-quarters of an hour, and a retreat was given there to working men during Coronation week, and another to business men. Between twenty and thirty of the former attended from one London parish.

Mention may be made here of the Redemptorist monastery at Perth where retreats have been given to the laity since 1869 with excellent results. Three retreats are given each year (in June, August, and September) and are mainly attended by business men from various parts of Scotland, especially Glasgow, Dundee, and Edinburgh. They open on a Monday evening and finish on the following Friday

morning. The men are in silence all the time, and have four conferences a day: Way of the Cross; two visits to the Blessed Sacrament in public; and the life of a Saint read at table. They are informed as to the amount of their bare expenses, and a box is displayed into which they may put that or any other sum if they please.*

This monastery at Perth (St Mary's, Kinnoul) is admirably suited for the giving of retreats. It is well wooded and gloriously situated on a hill overlooking the city and commanding a great sweep of mountain scenery.

Those who come often grow attached to the monastery, and there are some who have not missed a retreat for many years. These hand down a tradition of faithful observance of the rules of the retreat and are jealous guardians of silence. They do not like to see it broken, and certainly those in retreat are very edifying in their grave recollection. Only on the last day, after dinner, is the silence relaxed, and then all form one merry family who have abundance to talk of and seem to have nothing to trouble them but much to rejoice at after their retreat.

The retreatants generally take the oppor-

* For these details and for some information about the Redemptorist retreat-houses in Holland, I am indebted to the kindness of the Very Rev. Basil Gaisford, C. SS. R., the English Provincial.

tunity to provide themselves with medals, objects of piety, prayer-books, etc., and to have their rosaries blessed and indulgenced for themselves and others. These serve throughout the year as mementoes of the retreat when they are at home and at their work.

Having made this incursion into Scotland, we must not omit to mention the annual retreat for the working men of Glasgow and others which was instituted four years ago at the Benedictine Monastery of Fort Augustus. This retreat is held during the time of the Glasgow holidays, the third week in July. In 1910 over fifty men took part in it. They were housed chiefly in disused college dormitories, but some of the older men had rooms. The retreat proper lasted from Saturday night till Wednesday morning, three conferences being given daily. The charge for the retreat was twelve shillings and sixpence; for those who remained on for the full week, one pound. The men came chiefly from Glasgow and its neighbourhood, and represented many occupations—artists, solicitors, school-teachers, medical students, bookbinders, carpenters, clerks, steel-workers, coal-miners, waiters, shopkeepers, publicans, pawnbrokers, printers, masons, tailors, plumbers, ticket-collectors, and billiard-markers.

"The effects," writes Dom Columba Edmonds, O.S.B., to whom we are indebted for much information about these retreats,

" were manifestly a keener realisation of the paramount demands of our Faith, and a determination to lead better and holier lives. For many it was a conversion. One result has been more frequent communions."

The presence of a large community of monks and lay brothers, and the continual round of choir offices and daily sung Mass could not fail to make a deep impression on the men. The community helped in the waiting at table and undertook the reading at meals—a service always appreciated by the lay visitor who thus feels himself, as it were, one of the monastic family. Daily communion is almost universal at these retreats, and last year was introduced the hour's adoration at night.

After the retreat is over many of the men, as has been intimated, stay on for the rest of the week to take their holiday with the community. But it is a holiday with a distinction and a difference—a difference, since the days include morning meditation, evening talk, and plenty of hymn-singing; a distinction, for a holiday spent at Fort Augustus cannot lack distinction. It is not merely that the Abbey is superlatively beautiful in itself and in its surroundings; but the men during their stay there (as is evident from their own accounts) find their spirits uplifted and refreshed by the peace of the place, its beauty of ritual, its kindly spirit of hospitality.

The admirable work of retreats for women and girls which has already done so much good in England will be described in a future chapter.

In Ireland there are not as yet any houses exclusively devoted to the work of retreats for the working classes, though the need for such houses has of late been eloquently pointed out in a pamphlet entitled *Retreats for Workingmen: Why not in Ireland*, by the Rev. William Doyle, S.J.* Father Doyle urges their institution on many grounds:

"Are the toilers in our cities and towns less anxious about the salvation of their souls than their comrades of France or Belgium, less capable of leading holy lives and doing a layman's part in the building up of Christ's Kingdom on earth? Or, on the other hand, are our Catholic men so well grounded in their religion, so deeply rooted in their faith, as to have nothing to fear from the prevailing spirit of materialism and infidelity?

"To the anxious watcher signs are not wanting that we shall not be long secure from the attacks of those who, on the Continent, have worked such havoc in the Church. . . The tide of infidel literature, cheap, clever, attractive, is slowly gaining ground, carrying with it the foul poison of doubt and incredulity, sparing nothing, however sacred or holy.

* Dublin: *Irish Messenger*, Office 5 Great Denmark St. Price one penny. This excellent little pamphlet deserves a wide circulation.

"To those who would say: 'My men are excellent Catholics, they have no need for a retreat; it would do them no good,' we would answer: 'Try its effects, and you will see.' As a venerable priest remarked: 'Each pastor thinks his own flock the best in the world, and I did the same, but now that my men have made their retreat I see that there is still much to be done.'"

That such retreat-houses would become immensely popular in Ireland we may gather, not only from the splendid faith and devotion of the people, but from the readiness with which they attend the retreats for laymen which are held from time to time in so many of the religious houses. Before regular retreat-houses were established in England it was by no means uncommon for Irishmen living in this country to go over to Ireland for the purpose of making a retreat in a Franciscan friary or some other religious establishment.

Business and professional men in Ireland make retreats in large numbers. Mention may be made of the house of retreats opened at Milltown Park, Dublin, in December, 1859. The following April we hear of a retreat of three days being given to about forty tradesmen and labourers in preparation for Easter. During the next few years we find half a dozen retreats being given to laymen each year, the annual attendance being about one hundred and

fifty. Three-days retreats for gentlemen have long been held there in preparation for Christmas, Easter, and the Ascension. The average attendance is between sixty and seventy. To these must be added the frequent private retreats.

During the past three years "week-end" retreats have been held at Milltown Park for the benefit of young professional and business men and students. They arrive at 8.45 on the Saturday evening and leave at 9 on the Monday morning, having had six addresses. Strict silence is observed, and there is a General Communion at the close. So far these retreats have been held on the Sundays in Lent, and the accommodation of the house has been taxed to the utmost. The charge for these "week-end" retreats is only half-a-crown; for the three-day retreats it is seven shillings a day.

Many will be familiar with the spiritual and temporal entertainment given to a score of laymen each week by the hospitable Cisterians of Mount St Joseph Abbey, Roscrea, Tipperary. About ten ladies every week make a similar retreat in the guest-house at some distance from the monastery. Even more famous is the Mount Melleray Abbey, Cappoquin, Waterford, from which Roscrea was founded. Here we find the same hospitality given to even larger numbers. Although these retreats are not directed in the systematic manner to be found

elsewhere, yet these peaceful intervals of quiet prayer and reflection, spent in such holy surroundings, have proved an inestimable boon to many men and woman of the world who have felt the need of a spiritual tonic.

CHAPTER VII

AMERICA AND CANADA

It is interesting to watch a great and fruitful idea making its way into a country. It gets "taken up" in various fashions according to national peculiarities. It is coloured by local characteristics, and developed so as to meet current needs. A good example of this is found in the spread of the retreat idea. There is a close similarity between retreats all the world over; but there are also considerable differences. This is as it should be. The idea is a live one, and must manifest itself in various ways according to its environment. Retreats may be made to provide a remedy for the various religious and social evils which afflict different countries.

To any close observer of the retreat movement, one stage in its history was particularly exciting. We, in this country, were naturally most interested when it crossed the Channel and appeared in our midst. But to the quite impartial observer the really thrilling moment was when it crossed the Atlantic. "What will

happen when it reaches America?" was the question.

For in America the possibilities of the retreat movement was simply stupendous. Think of that enormous Catholic population, brisk and enterprising, keen on new ideas, and eminently business-like in its religion. It was this last trait that opened out such possibilities to the retreat movement. In other countries there is a certain conservatism—we might even say inertia—which tends to prevent new ideas from receiving a whole-hearted welcome or being carried out to their full extent. But in America a good idea is likely to be taken up and worked for all it is worth. And this is true in religion as in business: for to the American Catholic religion *is* business. With him there is no keeping of religion in a watertight compartment, as a Sunday morning affair. He is eminently a *practical* Catholic, and he puts into his religion all his qualities of keenness and methodical energy.

Hence it was probable that when such a very business-like and practical idea as that of the retreats reached American shores, it would at once translate itself into strenuous work. And this, in fact, has been the case. The retreat idea has struck right home in America. American Catholics declare that it is just what they want—just what modern society wants. They see its applicability to their own circumstances

here and now. They see points about it which we are apt to miss. So it is well worth trying to discover what this smart business-like people thinks of the retreat idea.

From a pile of American newspapers—Catholic and non-Catholic—let us note a few passages which tell of the exhilarating shock which resulted from the impact of this idea on the American mind. These passages could be corroborated by a mass of private correspondence.

Here is a New York paper, the *Sun*.* After some arresting headlines this is what we find:

"A movement described as entirely new among the laity of the Roman Catholic Church in this country got its first real start in this city yesterday, though it had its beginning in the work of an enthusiastic supporter somewhat earlier."

This is characteristically prompt. A non-Catholic newspaper grasps the importance of the work the day after it gets its "first real start." The article goes on to describe the first retreat given at Fordham University to eighteen Catholic laymen.

These eighteen men evidently realised that they were engaged not merely in a process of private spiritual stocktaking, but in founding a work of vast public importance. On the

* July 12, 1909.

second day of the retreat they had a "social assemblage" as the *Sun* calls it, in order to make plans for establishing a popular retreat-house.

"At yesterday's social assemblage the general idea of the retreat-house was enthusiastically supported, and when the eighteen men leave the Fordham grounds to-day, each will constitute himself a missionary for the cause."

By the second day these retreat-makers had discovered that the work was sound. Hence they lost no time in pushing it. We note that they included "lawyers and business men, employers and clerks." And their schemes were ambitious: "The plan is to have there fifty retreats a year." This was not bad for the second day of the first retreat!

How did the retreat idea strike these men! It seems to have presented itself to them especially on its "social" side. Retreats would check the divorce of religious teaching from business and professional life. As one of them put it:

"Why, it has even become impossible or unsafe to buy real estate in this community without having the title guaranteed by one of the title guarantee companies by reason of the falling away from all that religion teaches of the general life. . . . This divorce I speak of is noticeable as we all know in the business or profession even of lawyers or doctors. The instruction in the retreat

will attempt a correction of this evil, and will endeavour also to bring home to employers and employees the duties of each, individually and towards the other."

These shrewd observations show a highly developed "Catholic social sense," which should do something to influence public life in America.

An article in the *Catholic Standard and Times* * takes much the same point of view:

"The consequences of this divorce of religion from our midst are evident in every domain, among all classes of the modern community. Every species of crime is rife, and increasing at a rate positively terrifying. Vainly do we multiply our police and ask for prisons and try to forget that there are cankering sores eating at the very heart of our community, for the cure of which police, prisons, or any other interference of public authority is futile. Laws are only effective when they find an echo in the hearts of the people."

The article goes on to describe a retreat just made by the writer at Keyser Island:

"Matters which in our daily lives seemed to possess a supreme value, motives which exercised such a disproportionate influence on our actions, now assume their proper dimensions."

This well describes the retreat atmosphere, and what follows equally well describes the retreat results:

"We were fast becoming mere animal machines.

* October 2, 1909.

By the end of the lectures we felt a new dignity as men, the most perfect work of God's creation. We returned to our ordinary avocations not with a less keen interest in our temporal duties, but with a clear realisation that they were a means to an end and not the object of life."

A week later we find a well-written article in *Harper's Weekly*, entitled, "A School for Souls." It describes a retreat at Fordham University—a retreat in which three lawyers, two bricklayers, three carpenters, a school principal, nine business men, the president of a municipal department, several clerks, a plumber, and others took part. It pictures the intent, uplifted faces of these men in the little chapel, listening to the "points." "One seems to feel the thumbs of God at work upon the clay of their souls."

"There is indeed, to the imaginative, a sense of some dawning, half-conscious, ecumenical brotherhood that has brought these men of diverse lives together into one communion."

What strikes the writer particularly is the business-like character of the work done in the retreat. "The work to be done here by the mind is as precise, the obedience to be rendered to the instructor as unquestioning, as any at that famous sanitorium where a martinet proprietor builds up misused and neglected bodies."

The article concludes with a sketch of one of

the pioneers and directors of the retreat movement in America, Father Terence Shealy, S.J.:

"He has been Professor of Jurisprudence at the Fordham Law School, and Professor of Ethics at the medical school of Fordham University—a fitting training for this new office to which he has been appointed by the Jesuit Provincial. He is a fine, stalwart, earnest, sensitive, humorous man. If he were not an Irishman of the best and most representative type, you would say that he deserved to be."

The practical business sense which tells the American Catholic that the retreat movement must be made known, also tells him how to make it known. The writer of the article in *Harper's Weekly* tells us how those who are interested in the movement secure fresh recruits.

"The movement has been tremendously successful," said an enthusiastic member of the organisation, "and it is the simplest matter in the world to obtain interest in it. We go to some friend—some business man of the average type, for example—and say to him:

"'Do you believe in this—and this—and this?' mentioning essentials of the Christian faith.

"'Why, yes, I suppose so,' he will answer.

"'Then,' we say to him, 'why not take a day off and think it all over? Either religion and the condition of the soul are tremendously more important than anything else on earth, or they are valueless.'

"When he has been here once, he is enthusiastic to return."

Here we see the American character at its best. It refuses to remain in a state of foggy uncertainty about religion. It agrees with Browning that "religion's all or nothing"—it must be squarely faced and "sized up"; and when its value has been ascertained it must be lived up to. An example of this spirit is to be seen in the number of Catholic business men who attend daily Mass in America. They look at the Mass, and consider what it means. They discover that it is something eminently worth going to, so they go to it as often as they can. What a contrast with the half-baked Catholic of other lands, who, while retaining the name of Catholic and attending Catholic worship, occasionally and casually, never really faces his religion but keeps it, so to say, on the shelf.

Just one more cutting from the American Press must be looked at. This time it is a long illustrated article from the *New York Herald*.* The article is entitled, "Taking Account of Moral Stock at the Layman's Week-end Retreat," and the sub-title runs thus, "Keyser's Island in the Sound a Haven of Repose to World-worn Business Men who devote the Time to Prayer and Meditation." After this characteristic beginning the article

* November 21, 1909.

FELDKIRCH (See p. 97).

[*To face p.* 144.

goes on to describe a retreat made by "architects, lawyers, clerks, teachers, business men both Catholic and Protestant." We are told that "acquaintances were quickly formed," and we believe it. It is astonishing how close-knit a friendship can be formed during a three-days' retreat.

"The island comprises eighty acres abundantly wooded and laid out in graceful avenues and walks. The stately old mansion of the original Keyser estate has been retained—with the barn and stables, while several dormitories and a picturesque stone chapel have been built along the beach. A great stone crucifix rising from the highest point of the island dominates the skyline."

Keyser Island, it should be explained, is about forty miles from New York City. Here, as at Fordham, a permanent retreat-house is established.

And so the retreat proceeds. The meals are eaten in silence, except for the voice of one of the retreat-makers who reads from the lives of famous Catholic laymen.

"Through the open window came at times the chug-chug of a motor-boat far out in the Sound. The contrast in this quiet, silent meal and the lunch which had been eaten a few hours before in some city restaurant could scarcely be more striking. It was evident from the way in which the dinner was attacked that the men gathered about the board were by no means ascetics as regards their appetites."

The writer points out that the men were "a human lot, with interests quite as varied as those of a hundred similar groups met in little suburban hotels." It must not be thought that they were trained to meditate. They were just an ordinary lot of business men. It speaks volumes for the efficacy of the retreat that these men should have grasped the situation so quickly. Before the end of the first day each man was diving down into the unexplored recesses of his own soul.

"The quiet religious spirit of the place had infected them. . . . Except that the robe was lacking, they might have been monks vowed to perpetual silence. It was even seen then why Father Shealy had not found it necessary to enforce the rule of silence. This was evoked by the spirit of the place itself."

All the visitors, explains the writer, were engaged in measuring up the things that had once seemed monumental by a new standard. But here again the men are not thinking merely of their own souls. They have seen the value of the retreat and they are bent upon bringing others to share the same experience.

"During one of the informal meetings Father Shealy took occasion to explain the idea of the retreat and his plans for the future. A building to cost 75,000 dollars, he explained, was to be erected at Fordham overlooking the Botanical Gardens, to be devoted entirely to the retreat.

Here one hundred or more laymen could meet every Friday afternoon, returning at nine o'clock on Monday morning, so that but half a business day would be lost. It is intended to have this home always open, so that one may spend a night there during the week if he choose. Within five years, Father Shealy prophesied, there would be similar retreats in or near every great city in the country."

In June, 1910, a circular was issued announcing retreats at Fordham during the summer for the Knights of Columbus, the Holy Name Society, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, for law and medical students, for the organisers and promoters of retreats. The circular continues:

"The success of these retreats will depend especially upon the earnest co-operation of those who have already made the retreat. Each one has a splendid service to render to this saving Apostolate; a service that is not only a great privilege but a sacred duty.

"The interests of the movement are best promoted by personal representation and by personal appeal.

"We desire to have bands of fifty men in these retreats, and we shall have them if each one does his loyal and manly part."

This vigorous enthusiasm has been well sustained. In May, 1911, was held the first public meeting of "The Laymen's League for Retreats

and Social Studies " * in the Carnegie Hall, the " largest available auditorium in New York City." Five thousand men attended the meeting, at which Archbishop Farley presided. It was announced that a retreat-house had been purchased on Staten Island.

Meanwhile the retreat movement had started in other parts of America. In June and July, 1910, retreats were given in English and German to laymen at the Sacred Heart College, Prairie du Chien, Wis., under the auspices of the energetic Central Society. The pioneers were delighted with the experience. They included " labourers, farmers, merchants, government employés, a real estate man, a physician, a county treasurer, an ex-city treasurer, men retired from active business life, men still in the struggle of business." † We are told that a wealthy business man who was unable to come himself sent one of his clerks, whose expenses he offered to pay. On the conclusion of these retreats an organisation was formed to promote the work under the presidency of Mr Lawrence Gonner, a leading Catholic of Dubuque. The Rev. Paul G. Rohr, S.J., who had made a special study of the retreat movement and done much to promote it, was requested to draft a constitution for " The Sacred Heart Retreat League." More retreats followed in 1911, and

* The offices of this League are at 20 Vesey Street, New York City.

† *Catholic Tribune*, 7th July, 1910.

the establishment of a permanent house is only a matter of time.

Retreats for laymen are also held in many other districts—Chicago; Florissant; St Mary's, Kansas; Brooklyn, Cleveland; St Joseph's House, Techny; St Michael's Retreat, West Hoboken (Passionist); Gethsemani Abbey, Kentucky (Trappist); etc. St Charles' College, Grand Coteau, is used for retreats during the summer months.

We may now turn to Canada, where the retreat movement has recently become vigorous. Sporadic retreats have, of course, long existed there as everywhere else. But as far back as September, 1891, a regular retreat-house was secured by Father Desy, near Quebec—a fine villa, well wooded, and commanding a glorious view of the plains of Abraham. It was blessed by Cardinal Taschereau two months later.

But it is in Montreal that the retreat movement has lately been taken up with the greatest enthusiasm. A considerable impetus was given to it by the publication at the end of 1909 of an excellent little book by Father Joseph Archambault, S.J., entitled *L'œuvre qui nous sauvera* *—a book which elicited warm commendation from the Holy Father and the Canadian Hierarchy. A retreat had already been organised the previous June at the Maison Saint Joseph, Sault-au-Récollet. Montreal, by

* Montreal: *Canadian Messenger* Office.

a branch of the *Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne Française*, and this retreat given to twelve young men marked the beginning of a new era of retreat in Canada. Two other retreats followed in September, and in December Father Archambault, whose devotion to the cause had been unflagging, brought the movement to the notice of a distinguished gathering of clergy at Montreal under the presidency of Mgr. Bruchesi.

A committee was formed to organise the work on a permanent basis. Sub-committees carried the work of propaganda and recruiting among all classes of society. Lawyers, doctors, journalists, merchants, teachers, workmen, and students were all duly canvassed. Retreats were arranged for men engaged in similar occupations—an excellent plan, as we have already had occasion to notice.

The question of a temporary house was speedily settled, for the Villa de la Broquerie at Boucherville was put at the disposal of the committee. A more magnificent situation could not be desired, and the house is within easy reach of Montreal by steamer. After effecting the necessary alterations and repairs the committee sent out invitations to a series of retreats for particular classes (doctors, lawyers, merchants, workmen, teachers, journalists) and to other retreats for the miscellaneous public. No regular tariff was fixed, but those who made the

retreats were invited to contribute to the funds according to their means.

It must be added that the Villa de la Broquerie is only a temporary expedient. The committee is collecting funds for the erection of an enormous house where retreats may be given to large groups of men all the year round.

At Ottawa the work has been taken up by the Oblate Fathers. The first retreat was organised by the members of the *Cercle Duhamel* in August, 1911, and evoked much enthusiasm.

CHAPTER VIII

FURTHER EXAMPLES

RETREATS meet a universal need and are of universal application. Local methods may differ to some extent, but the same general features are met everywhere, the same results obtained. The Chinaman and the German, the Chilian and the Englishman give their verdict of the retreat in curiously similar terms: they felt strange and puzzled at first, then very calm and happy; life seems quite different now, they will come again and bring their friends with them; they couldn't have believed such results possible —why did nobody tell them of it before? A collection of letters and notes written in many languages by grateful retreat-makers in many lands presents a monotonous uniformity, varied by an occasional tendency to "drop into poetry" as though mere prose were an inadequate vehicle for the new thoughts which are struggling to find expression.

There is no need to describe all the retreat-houses that exist, but a few scattered examples may be added to the account already given. Some of them are selected because they exhibit

certain distinctive features which are not without interest.

A very promising beginning has been made in Australia. The former novitiate of the Society of Jesus. "Loyola," Greenwich, N. Sydney, has been enlarged and converted into a retreat-house and the first retreats were given there in November and December, 1911. The house is an ideal one for the purpose and the work is being taken up with enthusiasm.

Those who have read the admirable *Life of Cardinal Vaughan*, by Mr Snead-Cox, will remember how deeply impressed Herbert Vaughan was by the retreats which he witnessed in South America. These retreats are on a very large scale. Thus, the Report of the First General Catholic Congress of Chili, held at Santiago in 1884, informs us that during the previous ten years retreats have been given in a single house to 51,907 people, of whom 40,280 were men, the rest women.

Some interesting details of these retreats are furnished by a letter from Père Liégey, a Redemptorist in Chili, written in 1884.*

Père Liégey describes these South American retreat-houses which are found both in the towns and in the country districts. They are of somewhat severe aspect, large, square and low, with few or no exterior windows. The rooms are

* See *La Sainte Famille: Revue ascétique.* February and March, 1885. Avon, Seine-et-Marne.

lighted from the central court or garden. One of the sides is formed by the chapel, and there is a large hall for a refectory. Each of the dormitories holds from ten to fifteen people. The best organised of these houses is that which has been built for retreat-makers from the middle classes at Santiago, but even the very poorest are not without opportunities of making retreats.

As soon as the news gets out that a series of retreats is to be given at one of these houses, crowds flock in from all sides, on foot, on horseback, in carriages, and by train. Every class is represented. Young and old, rich and poor, form a surging mob round the house, and the excitement begins.

Admission to the retreats is by tickets, and the tickets cost something less than a shilling a day. Most of these tickets are taken in advance and some are given free to the poor; but a certain number are disturbed at the door of the retreat-house just before the retreat. Thus if three hundred and fifty places have been booked for a retreat, the Director will appear at the last moment and select another fifty men out of the crowd of candidates which may number several hundreds.

The Director's task is no easy one and four policemen have to protect him from suffocation by the eager crowd which presses round to secure tickets.

He mounts a platform, holds up a ticket, and

looks round the sea of faces. There is a general cry of "Me, Father, me!" and unabashed individuals proceed to shout out the reasons which constitute their special claim to the ticket:

"'I need a retreat so badly, I am a bad lot!'
"'I am a drunkard!'
"'I am a thief!'
"'I have not been to Confession for thirty years; give me the ticket!'
"'Give it to me, I have forgotten my catechism and all my prayers!'"

These particular claims are often endorsed with emphasis by female relatives:—

"'My son here is a scamp; the retreat will do him so much good!'
"'My husband here is a brute; he beats me every day. O give him a retreat, do!'"

Finally the fifty tickets are distributed and the hundreds of unsuccessful applicants turned away. Their distress is genuine. "I have walked for twelve hours to come here," says one. "I have ridden all day," says another.

What is the object of all this wild competition? The privilege of spending eight days of complete silence in a gloomy-looking house, living on scanty food at which a British tramp would turn up his nose, spending the days in religious exercises and making a general confession. These benighted South Americans give us something to think about. The possibilities of religious

experience are not, after all, exhausted by a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon.

The four hundred selected retreat-makers are admitted to the house, shown their rooms, and allowed to dispose of their modest baggage. An hour later (5 p.m.) a bell calls them to the chapel; each is assigned a place there which he keeps during the whole time.

The retreat, as has been said, lasts for eight days. All other occupations and all intercourse with the outside world are forbidden. The silence is as strict as among Trappists. Each day there are three meditations, an instruction, a sermon, and two catechisms. The sermon is followed by benediction. There is a certain amount of free time allowed for preparation for the general Confession. These Confessions—during which the penitent and the confessor are separated by a grille and a veil—are often broken by sobs and tears. Every evening after the sermon the lights are extinguished and the men scourge themselves with cords and whips which they bring for the purpose. The process is no mere formality but a very vigorous performance indeed. Some will call it fanaticism. Others will merely see in it a natural expression of a faith and sorrow for sin which is not too commonly met with, though it was familiar enough to our Catholic forefathers, and would not have surprised sensible people like Sir Thomas More.

The men gather at the altar rails for the general Communion with changed faces. They had entered with troubled looks, scowls perhaps; now they are tranquillised, happy, beaming, Baptismal vows are renewed before the altar on which is set a copy of the Gospels. The Apostolic Blessing is given, and the men finally return to their rooms, collect their effects, and leave the house in silence.

Then follows an extraordinary scene. The public square is filled. On one side stand two or three hundred horses, ready saddled, on the other a number of ox carts. In the middle a large crowd of people of every age and condition is gathered in two parallel lines to welcome their relatives out of retreat and speed them on their journey home. The retreat-makers come out from the house and pass between the two lines, often in tears. They kneel down in public and ask pardon for the scandal they have given. Their relatives embrace them, raise them up, and take them home.

All this is no mere passing emotion. The effects are lasting. The men have had serious instruction, have faced life calmly and sensibly, have deepened their religious spirit. You meet them coming in from thirty leagues round to make a retreat, and you ask them where they are going; they answer: "To sanctify ourselves."

To-day there are thirty retreat-houses in the diocese of Santiago alone; others exist in the

towns of Chillan, Serena, Concepcion, Antofagasta, and elsewhere. In many of these houses retreats are given to priests, laymen of various classes, and women by turn. Other houses admit only workmen. Generally speaking, the task of looking after the material needs of the retreat-makers is undertaken by nuns.

During the last ten years retreats have been given in Chili to more than 300,000 men and 50,000 women. In 1910, at Santiago alone, 10,000 workmen and 1200 gentlemen, 200 working women, and 1000 ladies have made a retreat of three or nine days; at Talca more than 8000 men and 800 women; at Curico, a model town, more than 20,000 men and women made retreats.*

The development of retreats in Colombia during the last few years has been particularly striking. Under the direction of Father Louis Xavier Muñoz, S.J., the work, revived in 1903, has grown to almost incredible proportions. This Father and his staff are constantly engaged in giving retreats, and their services are in demand by parish priests throughout the country. It is impossible to meet all the calls made upon them; they have to be content with selecting the more important centres at which they give "regional retreats" or "flying retreats"

* See *Le Chili*, by Jorge Fernandez Pradel, Paris, 1911. Attention is called by this writer to the wonderful social results of these retreats. They have done more than anything else to repress drunkenness and crime.

of the kind already described as existing in France.

When the Fathers accede to a request for a course of retreats they ask the parish priest to prepare accommodation for about eighty retreat-makers. This is often done by securing a row of houses and making openings in the light party-walls. The Fathers arrive a day or two before the first retreat opens and superintend the final arrangements. It generally happens that the number of applicants for retreat increases as the course proceeds. The eighty of the first retreat will be followed by a hundred for the second—three hundred, perhaps, for the sixth. So arrangements have to be made for the securing of adjacent premises according to need. In the end a whole block of buildings may be requisitioned. The needs of the retreat-makers, even of the wealthier classes, are, however, very simple. Little more than a matress for each is required.

The next task is to find a zealous lady who will superintend the cooking. Three or four kitchens are fitted up, and a certain number of servants are hired for the first retreat to wait at table and perform other necessary services. But only for the first retreat; after that, volunteers abound. The men who have made the first retreat—including men of high social standing—gladly offer their services as waiters for the subsequent retreats.

Retreat-makers, as a rule, bring their own chairs, plates, and other requisites. The court-yard is generally used as a chapel; the ground floor for the refectory; and the first floor for dormitories. After the first retreat, a committee is formed to act as stewards during subsequent retreats, fix the small tariff, etc.

The men arrive for retreat at about 6 p.m. They gather in the chapel, where the rosary is said and notices are read. Before the retreat commences the members of the committee go among the retreat-makers and explain to them how to make a meditation. The retreat itself lasts for four full days, which are passed in strict silence. Every day there are three meditations and two instructions. The Fathers live with the men, but no one else is allowed in the house who is not making the retreat. On the morning after the retreat there is a general Communion, the men going in procession with a big crucifix from the house to the public church. After Mass they return to the house for breakfast, at which talking is allowed. Finally, all assemble in the chapel, where each passes in turn before the crucifix, kissing the wound in the side.

Sometimes it is found to be impossible to provide sleeping accommodation for all who wish to make a retreat. For such cases "semi-intern retreats" are arranged. The men dine and sleep at their own homes, but spend

CADIZ (See p. 98).

CADIZ (See p. 98)

[*To face p.* 160.

the day either in and around a church, or else in some large garden reserved for the purpose. They come at 6.30 a.m. and return at 6.30 p.m.

Moreover, those who have already made retreats, meet together after six months or a year to pass two or three days in recollection. In this way and by the formation of an *Association of retreat-makers*, the good effects produced by the retreats are maintained.

In 1903 twenty intern-retreats were given in seven different centres to two thousand and forty-seven men; in 1906 forty retreats were given to ten thousand and thirty-three men. Between January, 1908, and March, 1909, the number of intern-retreat-makers was *eighteen thousand*.

The semi-intern retreats were first introduced in 1907. In 1909 at Salamiria there were two intern-retreats and three semi-intern retreats; total attendance, three thousand two hundred. At Bucaramanga, during the same year, eleven retreats to four thousand men.* This last course of retreats was particularly successful, and was followed by a demonstration of faith and devotion which must be briefly described.

It was arranged that all those who had taken part in these eleven retreats should go to Holy Communion together, and that they should be joined by about fifteen hundred men, who had

* See Appendix.

lately made retreats at Piedecuesta, and five hundred others who had done the same at Florida. The Piedecuesta contingent was to march into Florida at two o'clock in the morning, and the combined forces were then to push on to Bucaramanga and join the rest.

All went well, and at six o'clock the six thousand men, each with candle and rosary, were marshalled in the great square outside the Church of San Laureano, where an altar had been erected. Mass was said in presence of the Bishop of New Pampluna, and after the Gospel, Father Muñoz stepped into the pulpit and prepared the six thousand retreat-makers for Holy Communion. Their reverence and devotion was very impressive. The Bishop was so much moved that he could not refrain from taking a ciborium and assisting the twelve priests who were giving Communion.

After breakfast there was a *Te Deum* of thanksgiving, followed by an ovation to Father Muñoz and his colleagues. By four o'clock the two thousand visitors had started on their long tramp home.

Many such striking scenes have been witnessed during the last few years in Colombia as a result of these retreats; and often these manifestations of faith have taken place not only in the first glow of enthusiasm after a retreat, but six months or a year afterwards, on the occasion of a "day of recollection." Thus at

Urrao we hear of a thousand men coming to Holy Communion and spending the whole of the previous night in the church in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

In Colombia, too, we do not fail to observe the excellent social results which always follow these retreats. Demoralising literature is turned out; hundreds of pounds are contributed in a single town after a course of retreats for the purpose of providing healthy reading matter. Temperance societies are founded or revived. In one town the sale of intoxicating liquors goes down fifty per cent; in another, seventy-five per cent. Charitable and social institutions are founded; and, in short, the retreats leave behind them a deep religious spirit which expresses itself in every department of life.

In Mexico there are five regular houses of retreat conducted by the Jesuits. That of N. S. de los Angeles (near the capital) was founded as early as 1840, but not many retreats appear to have been given there until 1894, when the work was thoroughly organised by Father Soler. At present three retreats are given there every month—one to the young men belonging to the Sodality, one to older men and one to women. The average attendance is about thirty. Retreats are also given three or four times a year to the clergy; and, finally, a few retreats are given gratuitously to the

poor who attend in groups of about eighty at a time.

A second house (*El Calvario*), at Puebla, was built by Father Cavalieri in 1878; a third at Orizaba, by Father Labrador, in 1906; a fourth, at Leon, was finished in 1910; a fifth has just been opened in Durango. Two other houses, in Chihuahua and in Morelia, are in course of construction. These Mexican retreats have a tradition behind them, for three retreat-houses existed in Mexico before the suppression of the Society of Jesus. When these houses were closed, the work was taken up by the secular clergy, who still carry it on, providing retreats for the laity in their own houses or the public churches. The Oratorian Fathers are also particularly successful in this kind of work.*

From America we may pass to China. At Siao-ying-li near Tang Kiou a series of retreats is given every few years by half a dozen Lazarist fathers (European and Chinese) to the natives. Each retreat lasts five days and is attended by two or three hundred people. To judge from accounts of the retreats held in 1904 the retreat-makers must have required all their courage. The weather was desperately cold, there were no fires, some straw on the ground

* *Perbelle hoc munus conservarunt* writes Father Decorme, S.J., from N. S. de los Angeles. To him I am indebted for these details.

sufficed for bedding, and the courtyard was used as a refectory. The retreats were attended by the poorest and most ignorant of the people; but we are told that they were intelligent enough to appreciate the classical work on Christian Perfection by Father Rodriguez, in spite of the temperature.

Similar retreats are held elsewhere. Private letters describe a retreat held a few years ago at Chenn Tcheou and followed by forty men who, in spite of free invitation, insisted upon paying their own expenses. What seems to have struck them most was the manner in which the retreat led up to a General Confession, giving a clear view of the past and supplying powerful motives for genuine sorrow and purpose of amendment. This they expressed somewhat quaintly. An ordinary confession of devotion they said, was a mud hut; a confession made during a mission was a clay house faced with bricks; a retreat confession was a brick house faced with tiles, this last representing, apparently, the ideal of solidity and splendour.

The Bishop of Cochin finds that the best way of establishing converts in the faith is to give them a month's retreat before baptism. The result is a solid spiritual formation which could scarcely be attained otherwise.

In fact, these retreats have long played a very important part in Catholic missionary effort. Thus in Central Madagascar retreats are given

as a preparation for baptism and first Communion as well as to various classes of Christians.* In particular special retreats are provided for schoolmasters and catechists. It is felt that the best way of evangelising the country is to form a picked band of really apostolic laymen. This is an idea which constantly recurs in the history of retreats. Wherever there is a Catholic work to be done, whether it be converting heathens, organising a parish, reclaiming the lapsed, founding a new religious or charitable organisation, giving new life to an old one, in every case the work can best be done, not by general exhortation or direct action upon a crowd, but by giving a solid, spiritual formation to a few men or women and getting them to take it up.

The retreats given in Madagascar are retreats properly so called; not as elsewhere in the missions, a mitigated or adapted form of the retreat —a kind of cross between a retreat and a mission. Such compromises have their use even in countries nearer home where, for one reason or another, the full retreat is not always practicable. Morning and evening meditations in a public church, spiritual week-ends for busy men, days of recollection and the like are highly profitable; but we must be careful to remember that such expedients cannot make the deep impression produced by a real retreat and do not result in

*C.B.E., No. 27.

that training of an élite which is the special work of the *Exercises*.

It is not many years since these retreats were introduced into Madagascar, but their success has been astonishing. About ten thousand men and women follow them each year.

CHAPTER IX

SOME OPINIONS

It may now be useful, and not uninteresting, to see what is thought of these retreats by masters of the spiritual life, by ecclesiastical superiors, by men who have given them, and men who have made them, and men who have watched them, by men who have never seen them but feel qualified to write about them, by enthusiastic friends and uncompromising foes. The hostile criticisms, by the way, are perhaps the most instructive. The admissions of exasperated opponents are a particularly valuable testimony to the power of the retreats.

We may begin, as Joubert advises, by taking the opinion of the Saints.

St Alphonsus Ligouri gives some examples of the esteem in which retreats were held by earlier masters of the spiritual life:

"St Charles Borromeo began to live a perfect life after the first retreat he made in Rome. St Francis of Sales also attributes the first beginnings of his angelic life to this cause. Father Louis of Grenada, a man of great virtue, used to say that his whole life would not suffice to explain the new

knowledge which he discovered of the eternal truths in going through the *Exercises*. The Venerable John of Avila, exhorted all those whom he directed to make the Spiritual Exercises which he called a school of heavenly wisdom; and Father Louis de Blois, the holy Benedictine, used to say that they are a precious treasure which God has manifested to His Church in these latter times, for which we ought to render Him special thanks." *

The Saint's own predilection for retreats is well-known:

" As for myself, I have a great affection for the Spiritual Exercises gone through in solitude; for it is to having done this that I owe my conversion and the resolution I took to leave the world and enter religious life." †

The list of like testimonies might be extended almost indefinitely. In every age Catholic writers have commended the practice of retreats in at least the wide sense of the term,‡ and retreats in their more modern and systematised form, particularly according to the method of the Spiritual Exercises, have received the warmest approval of the saints and masters of the spiritual life during the last three and a half centuries.

St Teresa declared that in the *Exercises* she found what she had been seeking for many

* *On Retreats.* By St Alphonsus Ligouri. Translated by Rev. E. H. Buckland. London: Sands & Co.

† *Ibid.*

‡ See Tronson, *Forma Cleri*, IV.

years; St Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, after experiencing the effects of the *Exercises*, gave them to her sisters; St Francis Xaxier, St Francis Borgia, and many another were trained on them; St Charles Borromeo, St Philip Neri, St Francis de Sales set the highest value on them; M. Olier, M. de Bérulle and other great ecclesiastical directors, employed them to renew the spiritual life of the clergy.

The approbations of Popes and Bishops would fill a volume. Those of the present Holy Father alone suffice to fill a pamphlet.*

On 26th September, 1909, Pius X. gave an audience to thirty working men. They had just made a retreat together—the first of its kind in Rome. The Pope was delighted and anxiously inquired whether they had been well treated. On being reassured as regards this important point he said:

"Believe me I could receive no greater consolation than to learn that you have made a retreat. You are, no doubt, of a humble condition of life, and you have to work with your hands. But the divine grace which you have received makes you rich now. Do not lose it."

The Holy Father, as he blessed the men affectionately, no doubt recalled with keen pleasure the wonderful development of the retreat work in many lands during recent years—a development which he has himself so often

*C.B.E., No. 1.

encouraged and in which he takes the keenest interest. It is said that early in his pontificate he declared that he hoped to be known as "the Pope of the retreats," and by this title he will surely be hailed by those who, in every part of the Church, have been helped by his kindly encouragement to carry on the work.

In thus commending retreats, Pius X. carries on the tradition of his predecessor. It was Pope Leo XIII. who wrote on 8th February, 1900:

"There is no doubt that these retreats, penetrated with meditation upon celestial truths, procure not only the sanctification of individuals, but the general utility of society. . . . We have learnt with the most lively joy of the creation of the new work, and of its fruits, which are already so abundant. . . . We desire to see . . . this work, so happily begun in France and Belgium, spread with equal success among other nations."

As soon as the retreats had taken root in Belgium, the Bishops of that country welcomed the new work with a litany of praise. The Archbishop of Malines called it "the means *par excellence* of establishing souls in the practice of good works"; the Bishop of Liége, "an institution which satisfies the most ardent wish, the *desiderio desideravi* of the pastor"; his successor pronounced it to be "a solitude from which men go forth positively transformed"; the Bishop of Bruges—"a work

which deservedly occupies the first place among all social works."

So, also, the Bishops of France. "The work is fundamental and perhaps unique," wrote the Bishop of Rodez. "It is the remedy for all our ills," said the Bishop of Cambrai. Cardinal Guibert wrote—that all would be well if Christians would devote three days each year to the consideration of the eternal truths. The spread of these retreats, he added, would transform the spirit of France and make it a Christian country once more.

In his book on the state of Catholicism in the twentieth century, the Bishop of St Gall writes:

"Agitation is cured by rest, distraction by recollection. The confusion and obscurity, naturally engendered in the soul by the one and the other, can only be escaped by returning in calm reflection to the principles of the true conception of the world and by correcting everything that is counter to those principles in our thoughts and in our life."

"The reader will already have remarked that these observations tend to recommend Spiritual Exercises. One can designate them without hesitation as a pressing need for priests and laymen at the present time. The more one is engaged in the tumultuous and incessant movement of the world, the more he is in danger of losing himself in it, and the greater need he has of reviewing from time to time his thoughts and his life. Were

they practised more generally, these *Exercises* would contribute largely in public life to rectify misguided zeal, to calm the passions, to supply clear and reasoned principles, to purify and fortify a disinterested devotion to the good cause."

"Many readers may be unwilling to adopt this suggestion; but they are not competent to judge of the matter since they have not themselves experienced it." *

The same enthusiastic welcome has been given to the work of retreats by the Bishops in every land where that work has been established. They have frequently taken the initiative in founding retreat-houses, or they have hastened to commend the work as soon as it was projected by others.

The secular clergy have cordially supported the work wherever it has been established. In countless instances they have declared that it has made an immense difference in their parishes. A few examples may be given:

"Since my twenty-five workmen made their retreat, Malines counts twenty-five more apostles," wrote the Dean. "I cannot tell you how much consolation our exercitants give us. During the recent mission they have been veritable apostles, bringing to the church numbers of their comrades, who, thanks to their example and influence, have trampled on the curse of human respect and have made their peace with God."

* *Zur stellung des Katholizismus im 20 Jahrhundert.—Herder*, 1902.

"My workmen have come back delighted with their retreat (wrote the *curé* of an industrial parish in Belgium) and, what is more, obviously changed men. I could not have believed it possible."

Another Belgian curé writes:

"Formerly I could not make the few men who consented to hear Mass at the door come into the Church. Now every Sunday I see a group of a hundred men, rosary or prayer-book in hand, praying in the middle of the congregation. Before the retreats for working men began there were scarcely twenty who made their Easter duties. Now a hundred receive communion each month. All the exercitants are an immense help to me in the various social and charitable works of the parish."

"I cannot thank God enough for the immense good done by the retreats," writes a priest. "Our four exercitants have returned enchanted. Next year I hope to send you not four, but forty. With such help it would not take five years to reform the worst parish."

Other letters are to the same effect:

"Your retreats are a blessing for our workmen. All are completely changed. All, young and old, ask me as a favour to be allowed to return later."

"In my daily intercourse with the workmen I see, more and more, how the retreat has calmed them and put into their hearts a contentment they had never tasted before."

"Sixty of our men have already made a retreat.

. . . They are real apostles; they strive to bring back their comrades to a better life; they wage war on bad books and papers, and give a splendid example to their own families. Of their own accord they have established a Sodality of the Sacred Heart, which already numbers four hundred and fifty men. I affirm without fear of contradiction that the work of retreats is the most useful work both for the spiritual and temporal good of the toiler, and is a fruitful source of religious regeneration for a parish."

As a fair sample of what the neighbouring parochial clergy in Germany think of these retreats, we may take the opinions of two priests (presidents of workmen's clubs at Munster) who have sent up a number of their men from the beginning. They very kindly sent full replies to some questions on the subject. We give the questions and the substance of the answers in catechetical form:

Q. What is the impression made upon you by the men on their return from a retreat?

A. They are happy and delighted and determined to go again.

Q. Do you notice any beneficial results in their lives?

A. We can testify emphatically to the good results. The men show *character*, especially in the fulfilment of their religious duties.

Q. Do they show zeal in supporting their Catholic club or guild?

A. They make the best members: they are full of zeal.

Q. In how many cases do you observe lasting results?

A. There is no doubt that the results will be lasting. Here there is certainly no sign of falling off. [One of the priests informs us that perseverance has resulted *in every case*: the other, in every case except two.]

Q. What is your reverence's opinions from experience with regard to these retreats?

A. (1.) I consider them an extraordinary means of promoting vigour and life in our Catholic men's associations, and I wish that many more could make them.

(2.) In my view the retreats for workmen are undoubtedly an extraordinary institution. God's blessing is on them. They produce the most zealous and business-like members; and in the case of those workmen who lead and are looked up to by others, it gives them an immense influence for good.

Historians and journalists, philosophers and novelists, preachers, lecturers, employers and statesmen have testified to the power of these retreats, and of the method of the Spiritual Exercises which is most commonly employed in them. Of the Ignatian volume the historian Janssen writes:

"Regarded by the Protestants themselves as a psychological masterpiece of the first order, this little book has been for the German people, for the history of their faith and civilisation, one of the

RETREAT-MAKERS AT CADIZ (See p. 98).

[*To face p.* 176.

most important writings of modern times. . . . It has exercised upon souls an influence so extraordinary that no other ascetical work can be compared with it. Whoever resolves to follow its brief directions faithfully will experience in his soul a transformation analogous or equal to that of which Ignatius was the first example." *

Journalists may be represented by Louis Veuillot:

" Heavenly blessings have always been attached to these exercises of the spiritual retreat—exercises which are so simple and so powerful, which shed such floods of light and lead to such firm resolutions. Heaven only knows how many souls they have saved." †

The retreat-house is God's crucible, and the wonders of the Divine alchemy are far more romantic than the plots to which the novelist generally has recourse. Pure human love, passion uncontrolled, adventure—all are tame and uneventful in comparison with the romances of a retreat-house, where the human soul is stirred to its depths. One novelist at least (and he of the first rank) has wandered into this enchanted field.‡ Others, it is to be hoped, may follow him.

But let us turn to the testimony of the work-

* *L'Allemagne et la Réforme, t. iv.*, p. 402.

† *Les Pèlerinages de Suisse.*—Tours, Mame, p. 50.

‡ René Bazin, *Le Blé qui lève.* A sixpenny English translation has been published under the title of *The Rising Corn.*

ing classes, of the thousands of men from factory and workshop and mine who have formed the bulk of the retreat-makers in a hundred houses. Here we do not look for subtle analysis or literary grace; the men who leave notes in their rooms or endeavour to express their sentiments on the doorstep at parting are not René Bazins. Yet there is much that is shrewd, touching and even beautiful in their attempts to describe their experiences.

From Belgian houses come such comments as these: "If people only knew what a retreat is, there is no one who would refuse to make one." "I would not exchange for a fortune the treasure I have found here." "The greatest happiness I could procure for my son, my father, or my friend, would be to get him to make a retreat also."

"It cost me much to come to the retreat," runs a note left in one of the rooms, "but to leave this house now costs me far more. I have passed three days in Heaven." "Since I made a retreat I no longer know myself, I am so happy."

Similar extracts from letters written by retreat-makers in Germany and in England have already been quoted. From France the following must suffice:

"After neglecting my religion for years and full of strange opinions and ideas against God, I have learned the goodness of the Divine Master. The

peace which had been banished from my home for years returns again."

"The three days of the retreat were the happiest of my life."

As an instance of what employers think of the movement, we may quote from the *New York Messenger* the verdict passed on the retreat movement by a well-known American manufacturer. The words were spoken to those who with him had just made a three days' retreat at Fordham:

"I am getting old now, and I have taken part in many movements in my time, but never in one so inspiring and invigorating as this. Other movements were outward to the world; this is inward to the heart and spirit. I feel for the first time, as it were, unfolded and revealed to myself, with the inner man set in order and eyes that look out and see straight. It is, indeed, a wonderful awakening. Life has new perspectives and new values, and the spirit breathes free and is refreshed. Talk of science, and progress, here we have the science and progress of life itself, where the logic of right living is made as clear and as forceful as the logic of right thinking. My friends, this is the one great movement of our day, and we ought to bless God that we are privileged to be among the first to belong to it in America. For surely this country, if any other, needs to pause and look within and think in the heart."

Catholic employers in Belgium and France who have discovered the advantages of a

retreat for themselves, have done everything in their power to make such retreats accessible to their employees, in some cases giving special holidays for the purpose. Their action has sometimes been regarded as a bribe to keep the men contented. This is an unfair view of the matter, though it is undoubtedly true that retreats do result in increased conscientiousness and improved workmanship.

Retreats, and particularly retreats after the method of St Ignatius, have from the first found critics. The book of the Spiritual Exercises was written by a layman and at a time when dangerous novelties abounded. It was inevitable that a work, dealing with such high matters and composed by one who had not studied theology, should have been closely scrutinised and rigorously judged. This will largely account for the early criticisms from within the Church, which St Ignatius had to encounter. The criticisms from without were of a different temper and were provoked by the fact that the Spiritual Exercises were proving amazingly effective.

The attacks of the early reformers have been repeated with variations in every age. Consistency is not their strong point. A retreat weakens the will and over-develops the imagination, say some. A retreat starves the imagination and over-develops the will, declare others. It makes men too practical. It makes

men too unpractical. It is a mere emotional revivalism. It is an unemotional appeal to the logical faculty.

Quinet and Michelet ascribed the effects of the retreats to hallucination systematically induced in the patient, and even Professor William James leans to the same explanation.* But the early Calvinist, Gabriel Lermaeus (Bariac) was much more circumstantial and picturesque. He attributes the success of the retreats to magical arts:

"By what sinister fascination do these Jesuits drive out of their senses men who come and shut themselves up in little cells, placed outside of their abodes, and so arranged as to be pitch-dark in broad daylight? Here it is that these priests keep the unhappy men in perpetual horror! Woe betide him who falls into their trap! for like the unfortunate wretches who went down into the cave of Trophonius, he may bid good-bye to joy and pleasure. One enters into retreat full of wisdom, and comes out bereft of reason, dead to all things of earth, marked out for tears and sadness. Once shut in his cell, the patient can neither see nor be seen. However, one of these magicians comes twice a day, to bring him a kind of *charm* traced on paper. The more he meditates on it, the greater the fascination becomes; he weeps, he shouts, he screams, as though the flames of hell were devouring him; he swears that he shall live in future as though each day might be his last,

* *Varieties of Religious Experience.*

and to cling to nothing on this earth. When finally he emerges from retreat he looks at the world with astonishment, as if he were now entering it for the first time. It seems to him no better than a storm-tossed sea, on which one may easily be shipwrecked, but which one must travel over all the same. At every instant the unhappy wretch fears lest he run on the rocks or lose his way, till finally despairing of reaching port in safety, he casts himself into a monastery. If among the Jesuits there be anyone weak-minded, they work upon him, remould him until he is modelled after their desires; he who was sluggish and easygoing, is rendered firm and severe towards himself; he who spurned obedience, becomes submissive; the lazy man is stimulated, the weak man sustained."

—*Acta Sanctorum, July*, vii., p. 797.

We are reminded of the answer given by Father Healy of Bray to an English statesman who averred that, on the Continent, absolution from the most horrible crimes could be bought for a few francs—" and dirt cheap, too," replied the priest approvingly. After all, a few days of dark cell does not seem an excessive price to pay for a radical cure of our sluggishness, laziness and weakness. As a matter of fact the cells are not dark, nor is any tendency to melancholia observed in those who have been their tenants.

True, one does see strange things in a retreat; and the sight tends to shake one out of a complacent rut—though not to upset the

mental balance. One retreat-maker (the story must be told once more) was asked by an awe-struck friend whether he had been shown a demon during his imprisonment. His answer will appeal to those who have ever made a retreat: "Yes, indeed—a horrible sight—my own soul."

It must not be thought that the practice of retreats—and particularly the Ignatian practice—has found no favour outside the Catholic Church. Passing over such classical references as that to be found in the writings of Macaulay,* we may notice the tendency of the modern non-Catholic press to speak sympathetically of the retreat movement.

Thus, for instance, the Protestant *Reichsbote*, ten years ago, welcomed the retreat movement as beneficial to society and advocated the establishment of a Protestant house of retreats:

"What our Church needs as its daily bread is the restoration of private confession. . . . If we only knew a house to which we might retire for a longer or a shorter time, with a godly man for its pastor who understood how to deal with sick souls, and in whom we might confide, and to whom we might commit our past life as into a silent grave! If there were only a house where we might retire to escape temptations and to gain strength for our spiritual life—a house of which the pastor had the knowledge of our needs, and would help us to fight shoulder to shoulder.

* *Edinburgh Review*, November, 1842.

"Where shall a father send his grown son who returns home with broken pinions, shattered and weary? Where is the house of the Samaritan which might furnish oil and wine for his wounds?

"And where shall the mother send her daughter who has suffered a great sorrow of soul, which cannot be healed by sea air or southern climes? Oh, if there were a Bethany into which Jesus might enter, a Siloe where the Lord might ask: *Wilt thou be healed?*

"We need a house which shall afford care and refreshment for the body, but still more, and principally, care for the soul. We need a house, a house of the Holy Spirit, with a sound doctrine, a sound life, a sound discipline; not a hot-house, but a house of prayer to which all who are sick might have free access." *

The same sympathetic interest in Catholic retreats, and the same desire to see them taken up by others, might be illustrated from many sides. The *Spectator* for 17th October, 1908, said that "to give men tired in the struggle of life an interval, however short, for facing the great problems would be a great achievement." The *Church Times* for the following week said:

"There is room, we think, for the adoption among ourselves of a plan, which promises more enduring spiritual results than the clubs and technical institutions on which we expend so much money and labour."

* Quoted in *Germania*, 13th December, 1900.

About the same time the *Methodist Recorder* was making the same proposal:

"It is, I confess, strange that the system of 'retreats' has never secured any very great popularity with the 'religion of experience.' Our peculiar insistence on the inner life and on the value of religious fellowship should have led us long ere this to some development along these lines. I believe there are thousands of thoughtful working men who would gather together for a few days every year to hear religious questions expounded, who would, nevertheless, avoid a place of worship which might be regarded as a middle-class social club." *

As a matter of fact, retreats are by no means unknown outside the Catholic Church. Mrs Craven has described a retreat arranged by Lady Harriet Cowper, Lord Palmerston's niece, at Broadlands. Two hundred people took part in it, and the "points" were given alternately by a clergyman and his wife, who followed the *Exercises* closely. More familiar are the retreats started by the Cowley Fathers, under Father Benson, in the sixties, and now extremely popular. In the London house of the Cowley Fathers, week-end retreats are fairly frequent. The Mirfield community also organise retreats for laymen on a large scale, and a house of retreats for professional and business men has lately been started at

* Quoted in the *Daily Telegraph*, 7th November, 1908.

Beaconsfield, owing to the zeal of the Rev. W. B. Trevelyan, Warden of Liddon House.

This chapter may fitly conclude with an account of a retreat made at Oakwood Hall, contributed to the *Catholic Times* by a well-known professional man and publicist, who imperfectly conceals his identity under the signature, M.:

"In the heart of Cheshire, standing on one of the little hills that rise up in steps to the backbone of England and the Derbyshire Peak, there is a quiet country house, surrounded by beautiful trees. From the windows one looks to the south over the gardens, in which the taste of the original owner has planted trees where other men plant flowers. Trees in every variety, great and small, spreading their foliage over all kinds of cunning walks and alleys, here stretching in ordered length, there sprawling through an undergrowth as wild as in a solitary spinney in some remote spot. At the foot of the hill flows a stream which is to carry on its waters later the ships of the world, a stream which demands something like an act of faith from a Liverpool man when he is told it is the Mersey.

"The place is quiet, remote—though the noise and bustle of Manchester is only a few miles away—shut off from all the struggle of modern life. There is a drive of a quarter of a mile from the entrance gate to the house, and as you pass the lodge you leave the modern world behind. With the sun shining through the foliage of the trees that line the avenue, the tired townsman enters

into a world of Faery. Light and shadow and seclusion, broken by gaps in the trees that show the fields stretching away across the valley to the crest of a farther hill.

"And thus you come to the country house—but such a country house. I believe this house puzzles the villagers.

"They can understand parties in such a house. They know something about the modern institution of 'week-ends.' In the numerous brood of penny papers that live by chronicling the tittle-tattle of the circles of fashion and wealth, they have read how society finds amusement and distraction by rushing from town to country from Saturday to Tuesday. But the week-end parties that come to this house hardly answer to the description in society papers. The village is not distracted by the hooting of motor horns. There is an absence of feminine frippery. These parties seem to be men's parties. And such men!

"I should like to ask the station porter's opinion of them. The luggage never rises above the dignity of a hand-bag. Some hand-bags may be bigger than others. But they are all *hand*-bags. Some of them must represent the very minimum of personal belongings. They would delight the heart of an old campaigner who loves to move in light marching order. And the men who own these bags add to the puzzle. They seem so mixed. They come from everywhere. They seem to work at everything. If you look at their hands, if you notice what they do with their hand-bags, you need not be a Sherlock Holmes to see that some of these men lead

lives of hard, manual toil, whilst others obviously don't.

"What, then—what in the name of the twentieth century is a Cheshire villager to make of these people?

"What can this mixed lot have in common? What brings together the gentleman at large and the mechanic, the professional man and the docker, the business man and the clerk? What are they going to do, and how can they spend their time? For from the moment they enter the avenue of the country house, till the day they come back to the station, the village sees no more of them.

"Of course, there are Jesuits at the bottom of this mystery. If our friends Dr Horton and Mr Joseph Hocking only knew! For this country house is a Jesuit house; it represents a feature of Jesuit industry; in it you may see the Jesuit at work. Now, I know all this because I have been there. I have 'week-ended'; I have been one of the 'mixed lot'; I have seen and gone through all those mysteries that envelop the men who enter on Saturday and come out on Wednesday. And before Mr Hocking can shock you with revelations, or Dr Horton exhort you to beware of these Jesuit intrigues, I am going to reveal the secrets of the place. I will be first in the field.

"Alas! Alas!

"Alas! My mystery is no better than most mysteries. It is certainly no better than the most mysterious mystery of Joseph Hocking or Dr Horton. Judge for yourselves. I will tell you a plain tale. I will tell you exactly what happened during my stay.

"To be quite straightforward, the whole thing was a business matter. A tremendously business matter. There was profit at the end of it. There was pleasure in doing the business. But, take it altogether, it was the most severely business-like time the men who gathered there had spent for a long time.

"The business was human life. The Jesuits had got us there. There was a tremendously big Jesuit in charge of us, a man with the body of a giant and a heart disproportionately big. I say he took charge of us, he cornered us, he set us problems, he shook us up, he made us turn ourselves inside out. He made us look at ourselves. What did life mean to us? What were we doing with it? Where had we come from? Where were we steering for?

"And when you begin to ask yourself these questions, and when you begin to answer them honestly, there is the makings of a Christian *and* of a man in you.

"Well, we spent the whole time revolving round these questions. Most practically, most interestingly, with occasional digressions—equally interesting.

"We read, we thought about things, we prayed, or tried to pray; we let the thoughts of God's purpose and of God's goodness soak into us, we got horribly ashamed of the littleness of our past lives, we were, at the finish, big with resolve to be God's men.

"A glorious time!

"The walks along these quiet alleys, the sharp tramp up and down the avenue (you can just say

a chaplet of the Rosary walking up and down), thinking about things, praying about things, resolving about things. And nothing to disturb the quiet but the songs of the birds, the sighing of the leaves, and the vocabulary of the carter who talked to his horses.

"I should like to tell about that carter; and his language.

"But that is outside my purpose. Perhaps some other day, if the editor will let me.

"A glorious time! We had recreations. After breakfast, dinner, and supper, we talked and walked. We felt the true value of silence. It gave such a new value to speech. We smoked. Some of us borrowed matches shamelessly.

"Have you ever heard of Christian democracy? I believe there are books written about it. But if you want to see it alive, in operation, you must join one of these parties. For here was the brotherhood of man. We gathered together, we talked seriously on serious things. But we also told funny stories and laughed hugely at them. We had fine arguments, about nothing, leading to nowhere, as every good argument should. And when we tired of talking all at once, we split up into little parties, and the professional man and the working man, the manufacturer and the mechanic, the gentleman at large (who was a University man and looked like St Francis of Assisi) and the docker, walked side by side and opened their hearts to each other.

"There was my friend Hennessy—an Irishman with a face that will take him into Heaven (St Peter knows his men). I will love him for ever for the

stories he told me. And our beadle, the man who summoned us, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (and lights out) to our duties. A sound man. A man you could trust. The Superior, with an instinct for things remarkable even in a Jesuit, hit on him at once for the job of bell-ringer. It was a tradition with us that he lived at the end of the bell-rope in the intervals between duties. He meditated there, he prayed there, with his eye on the three clocks all telling a different time, distracted between them and compromising by following them in turn.

"I could write a book on the men. But they might get vain, and then it would spoil all the good of the retreat.

"Did I say retreat?

"Well, now the cat is out of the bag.

"For what I have been trying to tell you about is a retreat which some sixteen men made at Oakwood Hall, Romiley.

"It was something like what I have been telling you, only better. For I can only hint at the marvels that were passing in the hearts of all of us. I cannot tell you the inside of things, and I cannot tell you the outside of things as well as they deserve to be told.

"But I will tell you what everyone wanted when the retreat was over. They wanted *to come again.* They wanted to come themselves; they wanted to get every other Catholic man in England to come; they wanted every man in England to come.

"It would regenerate England.

"There is a dog at Oakwood Hall. An enthusiastic dog, with a fine disregard for conven-

tions. His mission is to hunt rabbits, real and imaginary, and postmen. He embodies the spirit of the place. He chases his enemies and shuts off the outside world. The chapel is part of his care. He will stroll into a meditation with an air of seeing that things are going on all right. He can even endure the men's singing. At least he endured our singing, and that was unique. You would not believe that seven different musical versions of a sacred hymn could be sung at once. We know that it can, for we did it.

"And the dog never moved a muscle. His name is Peter and he is a wise dog.

"Take my advice and go to Oakwood Hall. Then write to the *Catholic Times* and send me a letter of thanks.

"And don't forget to notice that Peter, who chases rabbits and bites postmen, will welcome you."

DURANGO (See p. 99).

[*To face p.* 192.

CHAPTER X

RETREATS FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

That women as well as men need retreats is not a proposition which calls for laborious proof. Women need retreats because they have souls to set in order, and the setting of one's soul in order is an operation which becomes increasingly difficult in a world which seems to grow daily more distracting. Women, as well as men, are exposed to the modern epidemic of restlessness and feverish rush; like men, they are apt to be absorbed in material cares. Busy about many things, and exposed (whatever their condition of life) to many dangers, they need to seek those quiet opportunities of self-sanctification which are afforded by a retreat.

Mothers need retreats, for how else shall they find the strength to hold the family together, to face the drudgery, to bear the burdens, to smile through their tears, to check the hasty word that would leave a wound? There are many rocks on which homes may go shipwreck —drink and jealousy, temper and self-seeking.

In a retreat the mother takes her bearings and studies the chart of life's perplexing sea.

Working women need retreats, for the working woman of to-day is beset by a thousand perils. All the forces of the world seem against her. She has a stiff battle to fight, of which the comfortable classes know nothing. What a retreat means to her, only those can say who have seen her in retreat. Thank God, in this respect, at least, she is well provided for in our industrial country. London, Manchester and Liverpool all have their houses of retreat for working women.

Women of the leisured classes need retreats, not because they have seen too much, but because they have seen too little. They are apt to be self-centred in their very charities. Having never really discovered themselves, they have not succeeded in discovering anyone else. A *tête-à-tête* with God would make all the difference.

But what do women make of retreats, and what do retreats make of them? If our account of the institution of retreats for women has to be compressed within a single chapter, it does not mean that this part of our subject is comparatively unimportant. As we shall see, the movement is as highly developed among women as it is among men; and, indeed, the retreats for men have largely been made possible by the zeal and generosity of women. But

as a matter of fact much of what has already been said about men's retreats is applicable to the retreats for women which are now established in all parts of the world. The latter have, perhaps, attracted less attention than the former; but that is no doubt partly due to the fact that most of the literature of retreats has been written by men, and to the other fact that piety in a woman excites less comment than in a man.

We in England are all familiar with the work of the religious of Our Lady of the Cenacle. Their houses in Manchester, London and Liverpool, are centres of manifold spiritual assistance for women—and, primarily, they are houses of retreat.

Cardinal Vaughan, then Bishop of Salford, brought these sisters to Manchester in 1888, where they at once began to organise retreats for all classes of women and children. Their coming was hailed by the Bishop as "a powerful spiritual reinforcement in the battle we are fighting against the combined powers of evil." Such it has proved to be. The work made such progress that in 1910 new buildings, capable of accommodating one hundred retreatmakers, were opened.

"Their coming," writes the present Bishop, "has been a source of untold blessings to the diocese. Their works are now so manifold that it becomes a difficulty even to enumerate

them, and they are steadily growing both in number and magnitude year by year."*

A special feature of this house is the institution of retreats for school-children, particularly in preparation for their first Communion. In 1908 twenty-two retreats were given to one thousand two hundred and twenty children; in 1909 twenty-four retreats to one thousand three hundred and thirty-six children; in 1910 retreats to one thousand nine hundred and eight children. The Bishop of Salford refers to this work of children's retreats as "a most particular and providential institution with which our diocese is blessed." He continues:

"Week by week during the greater part of each year the little girls preparing for their first Communion in their respective parishes are brought by their teachers for a three days' retreat, given either by a secular priest or a Father of one or other religious Order, and then return to make their first Communion in their parish church. Over and above this, 'Perseverance Retreats,' as they are called, for children who have made their First Communion, are continually being held, to which many children come year by year for the deepening of their religious knowledge and spiritual life. It is customary to organise all these retreats according to parishes. The numbers of children making them are very large, frequently numbering

* From the Preface to *A Sketch of the Religious of Our Lady of the Cenacle by the Rev. H. Hohn.* From this excellent penny booklet much of the following information is taken.

sixty or eighty, and sometimes reaching to a hundred at a time. Since the erection of the very fine house of retreat opened last year, it has been possible to conduct these admirable retreats much more efficiently and on a much larger scale. As the children who are thus prepared are mostly very poor, the first Communion retreats have been given gratuitously . . .

"The concurrent testimony of the clergy and the school teachers of those parishes which have availed themselves of the Cenacle retreats, is that they produce quite a remarkable effect upon the lives and characters of the children who have the privilege to share in them." *

It is not surprising that Cardinal Vaughan, who had brought the sisters of the Cenacle to Salford, should also introduce them into Westminster. In 1899 he presided at the opening of their new house at Stamford Hill, the chapel and additional wings of which were blessed by Archbishop Bourne some years later. Here, too, retreats are given to school-children as well as to working girls, mothers of families, etc. Thus, during the first eight months of 1911, retreats were given to five hundred and sixty children, two hundred and eight working girls, seventy-three women and one hundred and sixty ladies.

* Lenten Pastoral, 1911. The Bishop, in this Pastoral, invites assistance in carrying on this invaluable work. The expenses of a retreat for one child only amount to two shillings.

The third English house of the religious of the Cenacle, that at Wavertree, Liverpool, was opened in 1909. In the first twelve months sixteen retreats were given to over three hundred children and one hundred and fifteen women and girls, to say nothing of monthly meetings and other forms of spiritual aid. During 1910 retreats were given to one hundred and ten working girls and four hundred and eighty-eight children. During the first eight months of 1911 the numbers were: working girls, one hundred and seven; children, two hundred and fourteen; married women, thirty-five.*

Something may be said about the origin of the Cenacle sisters before we pass on to review their work abroad, and the similar work done by other congregations of the same kind.

Their foundation is due to a secular priest, Jean Pierre Etienne Terme, who was born at Plagnal, on the borders of the Ardèche, on Christmas Day, 1791. The blessing of the Bethlehem shepherds rested on his boyhood; he tended sheep, and like many another Catholic shepherd boy, he pined to feed the flock of Christ. How often has the story been repeated—the intimations of the coming apos-

* Another Cenacle Convent has recently been started at New Brighton. We also learn that the Religious of the Retreat of the Sacred Heart, Orchard Road, Great Malvern, who organised a retreat for working girls in August 1911, hope to open a house of retreat for the working classes in Birmingham.

tolate seen in the making of little altars, the sermons, half play yet all enthusiasm, the definite bent to the priesthood, the preferring of secluded prayer to games. Of course, his dreams came true; they always do if we dream them hard enough. At twenty-three he was a priest, and after a spell of fruitful work at Aps, in the diocese of Viviers, he was sent to labour at La Louvesc, the burial-place of St John Francis Regis, and the goal of endless pilgrimages. In 1825 he fell in with Marie Victoire Couderc—later to be known as Mère Thérèse, but, then, a girl of twenty. Three years later she was superioress of a *hospice* built by Père Terme, and managed by a congregation of sisters which he had founded at Aps. Here the women pilgrims were shepherded body and soul; they were lodged and fed and instructed in their religion. Then came the excellent notion of giving them retreats. This, in 1835, was recognised as the main work of the congregation. Père Terme was now dead, but the Jesuit Provincial guided the young foundation, and rules and constitutions drawn up by him were approved. Just fifty years later came the final approbation from Leo XIII.

The sisters of the Cenacle founded a retreat-house at Lille as early as 1877. Here special retreats have been given to shop-girls, teachers, servant-maids, deaf mutes, mill hands and secularised nuns. Besides organising retreats, the

sisters at Lille give religious instruction and provide a school of needlework and a savings bank. Between 1878 and 1907 over twenty-five thousand women made retreats at this foundation.

From France the work of the Cenacle spread to many other countries. The house at Rome was founded in 1879, and is the centre of a group of religious works which includes an association for artists' models. Another house overlooks Lake Maggiore. The sisters instruct the villagers and take charge of local sacristies. At Milan they prepare for first Communion the children of the upper classes—and the chimney-sweeps. The little sweeps make a three days' retreat before their first reception of the Holy Eucharist, and all their brothers of the brush gather for a general Communion. At the feast which follows they are served at table by the children of the upper classes—the golden boys and girls

> who must
> Like chimney-sweepers come to dust,

but who, pending that inevitable consummation, have been taught to recognise God's image under the soot.

The Milan house also gives retreats to nearly all the ballet-girls of La Scala, some of whom are daily communicants. It also gathers the *Piccinine* (little errand-girls) the teachers and the outcast children.

The house at Naples gets together two hundred dressmakers, and, again, ballet-girls. Twenty-five retreats were given there in 1909.

At Tilbourg (Holland) twenty-nine retreats were given in 1909 to one thousand and five women and girls. A farthing a week is collected by promoters (mostly working girls) to enable free retreats to be given to men and women. The Brussels Cenacle in 1909 gave fifty-two retreats to two thousand one hundred and sixty-four retreatants. Hundreds of boys receive instruction here and the servant-maids have been gathered into a sodality.

Yvoir and Fribourg, Charleston and Newport (U.S.A.) all have their Cenacles. Everywhere we see the same adaptability, the same keen sense of local needs, the same readiness to do any kind of work the Church may require. Here it is savings banks, there needlework classes, there, again, a school of Plain Chant—everywhere religious instruction and retreats.*

* See Dr Hohn's booklet, above referred to. The following paragraph, from his "Conclusion," deserves to be reproduced in full:

> "Here, then, is an opening for well-educated Catholic young women who aspire to the more Christ-like life of the Counsels, having a special devotion to the Divine Office of the Church and to the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, coupled with active work for the salvation of souls; and who, yet, either feel no attraction towards nursing or teaching orders, or are unable to qualify for such forms of work according to modern requirements."

Other congregations besides the religious of the Cenacle are engaged in organising retreats for women in many lands. A few instances may be given from Belgium, where about fifteen thousand women make annual retreats in fifteen regular retreat-houses.

The *Dames de Saint-André* founded a retreat-house for women at Tournai in 1892 —the first of its kind in Belgium. The idea was due to the fertile brain of Père Lechien, whose success in promoting retreats for men has already been described. The number of retreat-makers in this house soon reached twelve hundred a year.

The same congregation opened a house at Antwerp in 1901. By 1st January, 1904, three thousand women had made retreats there. Two years later the number had risen to nearly seven thousand.* A third house was started at Charleroi in 1903.

The *Dames du Saint-Sacrament* also organise retreats. Their house at Liége was blessed by the Bishop in June, 1902, and by January, 1905, seventy-seven retreats had been given to three thousand two hundred women. The local clergy gave willing testimony to the good results of the work seen in family and parish life. Every two months a day of recollection is held for those who have made retreats, and it is noticed that where these recollections are

* Report of 17th Eucharistic Congress, Tournai 1906.

well attended, the effects of the retreat are sustained in a very marked fashion.

It was not until 1905 that special retreats for married women were started at Liége. It was anticipated that there would be some difficulty in getting married women to keep silence, but these anticipations were completely falsified. Even the grandmothers, we are expressly told in the Report, kept silence admirably.

Mention has been made of the occasional retreats for working men organised at the Convent of *La Retraite*, Balham, London. This convent was established in 1880 for the purpose of educating girls and receiving ladies who wished to make retreats. It is the house of a religious congregation which has played a very distinguished part in the history of popular retreats, and which, on the Continent, is still enabling large numbers of men and women to follow the Spiritual Exercises.

The sisters of *La Retraite* owe their foundation to a Breton lady of noble birth, Catharine de Francheville, now declared Venerable. The story of this remarkable woman, and of her devoted labours in the cause of popular retreats, has been well told in a pamphlet belonging to the series to which reference has so often been made.*

Something must here be said about the

*C.B.E., Nos. 13, 14.

occasional retreats for women and girls organised by religious congregations not specially devoted to this work, or by local lay-committees.

In England retreats of this kind were in vogue before the arrival of the sisters of the Cenacle. It has long been the custom in many convents to organise retreats for old pupils and ladies generally; more recently the working woman has been admitted to such retreats. Thus, in 1892, a working girl at a meeting of the Children of Mary in one of the Southwark sodalities, expressed a wish that she and her companions could be enabled to make a retreat: "How lovely it would be to spend a few days in a convent!" The idea was taken up and the August bank-holiday, with the two days preceding it, was selected as a favourable opportunity for a working girls' retreat. The nuns of Perpetual Adoration at Balham kindly lent their convent for the purpose.

So in August, 1893, thirty-one girls, all of them Children of Mary, of the St George's and Bermondsey sodalities, attended the first retreat. The next year fifty-one sent in their names, and it became necessary to apply to other convents for the extra accomodation required. In 1906 there were two or three hundred girls making the bank-holiday retreat in five convents.

These August retreats in London (which owe much to the devoted zeal of the late Miss André, and have been supported with no less zeal by the Ladies of Charity) are now firmly established and effect a wonderful amount of good. The working girls declare that they know of no holiday so pleasant as a retreat; their fervour is most edifying, and it is rewarded by an increase of strength with which to fight the difficult battle of life.

As early as May, applications come in for a place in these retreats. As each name is sent up it is set down under the particular convent to which the applicant wishes to go. If anyone applies for a convent to which the full number is already assigned, she is informed that the convent is full, and that she must choose between the remaining convents in which there are still vacancies. Each convent is then provided with a complete list of those to be expected for the retreat, and to each retreat is forwarded an entrance card which is to be presented at the convent on arrival. The retreat begins on the Friday evening before the August bank-holiday and lasts till the Tuesday morning.*

Of retreats for ladies there is plentiful provision in Ireland. A few examples will suffice.

* Applications for places and for information regarding these retreats may be sent to Mrs Passmore, 3e Hyde Park Mansions, London, W.

At the Sacred Heart Convent, Mount Anville, Dublin, retreats for ladies were started nearly half a century ago. At first they lasted eight days; later, the time was reduced to four. Retreats are also given to girls who have lately left school.* In 1911 special retreats were organised for the benefit of hospital nurses and of shop assistants. The attendance at the former was fifty, at the latter a hundred. The average attendance at the ordinary retreats is about fifty. At the annual retreat for ladies at the Sacred Heart Convent, Armagh, the average is considerably higher. At the Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, Dublin, one hundred and six attended the retreat in 1910, one hundred and twenty-four in 1911.

In this last case the whole time of the retreat is passed in the convent. Elsewhere, as at the Dominican Convent, Blackrock, Dublin, some of those who follow the retreat return to their homes to sleep.

A four days' retreat for ladies is given each July at the Ursuline Convent, St Mary's, Waterford. About fifty attend.

The work of organising retreats for women in France has been taken up of recent years by that wonderful association, the *Ligue Patrio-*

* Such retreats are particularly valuable. They are not unfamiliar in England. For example, a retreat of this kind is organised in September by the Holy Child nuns in their convent at Cherwell Edge, Oxford.

tique des Françaises—a body which now numbers over half a million members. The first retreats specially for *Ligueuses* were organised in 1905 by the committee for Ille-et-Vilaine. At Rennes a retreat was given to *dirigeantes*, and another to members living in the country. The following year sixty *zélatrices* made a retreat—also at Rennes. Henceforward the work began to spread, and in 1907 ten retreats were given. In 1908 the number rose to twenty-nine (one of which was a retreat to one hundred and fourteen members from twenty-two different parishes). In 1909 thirty-five retreats were organised, including eight popular retreats which were all well attended—one of them by three hundred women. In 1910 there were forty-one League retreats in all parts of France; and finally, in 1911, the League organised a comprehensive system of "regional retreats" similar to those provided for men. Fifty-eight retreats were given including a few "extern retreats."

The *Ligue Patriotique* is to be congratulated upon their excellent results; and we may hope that its example will fire the sister *Catholic Women's League* in this country to organise regional retreats after a similar fashion. There is no doubt that such retreats would be of incalculable benefit to members—would intensify the high ideals which they strive to keep before them. The Ladies of Charity are doing an

admirable work in London by providing retreats for working girls in August; but the work is capable of indefinite extension, and the *Catholic Women's League* in the provinces especially will find fields ripe for the harvest.

COMPSTALL HALL (See p. 113).

[*To face p.* 208.

CHAPTER XI

METHODS AND MEANS

We have now seen something of the institution and growth of popular retreats in many parts of the world. The story, here briefly and imperfectly sketched, has been a marvellous one. Growth has been rapid and grace abounding. All over the Church, popular retreats are now recognised by Bishops and priests, by laymen of every class, as a most powerful instrument of religious reformation, as a source of untold blessings for the individual, and for society.

There is, perhaps, a danger of our forgetting the amount of thought and work which has been required for the securing of these results. God has given the increase, but the planting and watering have been heavier than might be gathered from the foregoing pages. *Il vous donnera beaucoup de consolation* says Père Lechien to his visitors when urging them to take up the work. "Much consolation," yes, but, as Père Lechien himself tells us, only at the price of unflagging labour. Disappointments have to be faced again and again before the

consolation may be hoped for. Popular retreats are marvels of organisation; but the organisation has only been built up by heroic patience and unshaken faith.

In the light of the experience gained by those who have seen their work undone time after time, we may here set down some of the normal conditions of successful popular retreats. This is all the more desirable since the support of such retreats is not merely a matter for their immediate organisers to consider; it demands the practical assistance of Catholics in every position of life.

As regards the securing of a house and its personnel, little need be said. Retreat-houses require to be founded. Beginnings may be small, a house may be hired, a debt incurred. But the tariff paid by the retreat-makers (necessarily kept low if the retreats are to be popular) cannot do more than meet current expenses. The rent or purchase money of the house must be the gift of benefactors. This is where the well-to-do Catholic comes in. Others will be ready to hew the wood and draw the water if he will draw the cheque. Just as one endows a bed in a hospital, or a cot in a boys' home, so one may give a room in a retreat-house, a room in which a new sick soul may be healed every week or a strong soul made stronger. Surely the prospect is a tempting one to those who have the requisite means, and the requisite faith.

As for the direction of retreats, the regular clergy have shown every willingness to undertake it, and the secular clergy have cordially co-operated and in some cases taken the initiative.

A less simple matter is the recruiting of men for retreats. This must be reduced to something like a fine art if the retreats are to succeed. It is quite true that the retreat-houses are their own best advertisement and that, when they are efficiently conducted, the men who have come once will come again and bring others with them. But to introduce the work to the men in the first instance is commonly a task demanding both method and perseverance.

We may now examine some instances of the way in which recruits are secured for their first retreat. We may then see how the work is kept before them and how, once secured, they secure others. In all these matters, of course, the same methods will not work everywhere; it is unwise to introduce foreign expedients until we are quite sure that they suit our particular circumstances.

Here is a flat in the heart of Paris, the office of the French retreat propaganda. The director is a past master in the art of luring people into retreat, a recruiting sergeant of rare persuasiveness. The walls are lined with drawers containing cards. There were sixty thousand cards some years ago; the number has probably

grown since then. On each card is the name and address of a prospective retreat-maker, his occupation and the name of the friend who recommended him for the embarrassing honour of figuring on a card. Then follows a record of assaults, generally ending in capitulation and ardent co-operation. An imaginary card might be Englished as follows:

SMITH, JOHN.
2 Lavender Villas, Stodgeport.
Plumber.
Friend of Peter Ryan.
7/8/05 asked: no answer.
5/8/06 asked: no answer.
3/9/07 busy.
1/9/08 might come another year.
4/8/09 made retreat.
5/8/10 made retreat. Brought Paul Jones.

The story of John Smith's surrender is there in a nutshell, and the story is repeated with countless variations. The director never desists until he gets his man. Refusals merely whet his appetite. He sends, not merely circulars, but personal letters. Such importunity may sound aggressive, but we must remember that in the end John Smith will be grateful for it. "I am so glad you stuck to me Father," is the inevitable comment after the retreat.

Here is a festive gathering at Haut-Mont (May, 1908) celebrating the 25th anniversary

of the great retreat-house. The house is full of visitors, the men who have made retreats, the clergy who have encouraged them, the women who have helped the work and also started retreats of their own. Père Watrigant, the pioneer, finds himself in the midst of those who have entered into his labours. The smiling old man has to stand a fire of friendly chaff from many who long held out against his persistent invitations to a retreat and finally gave way. "I had a dozen letters from him before I went," said a distinguished lawyer. The reader of one of the papers at this Jubilee gathering describes Père Watrigant in those early days of starting the work. The mornings would be spent in writing innumerable letters; the afternoons in visiting far and wide. The idea of popular retreats was new and strange, and the task of getting it into people's heads might have daunted anyone but Père Watrigant. But every winter his campaign went on. He always had some excellent reason for paying visits; and then by degrees the subject of retreats would be introduced. He became known to his friends (namely, all who ever met him) as *le Père Intrigant*.*

We turn to Holland and find the same systematic propaganda marking the early stage of the great house at Venlo. Father Cramer, the

* *Fête Jubilaire de l'oeuvre des Retraites Fermées*, Lille, Victor Ducoulombier, 1908.

director, spent day after day letter-writing, interviewing, lecturing, and preaching about the retreats. He worked through the parishes, meeting everywhere with the kindest welcome from clergy and laity, but giving himself no rest. The idea was a new one and had to be explained over and over again.

"As I struck farther into the country districts the wildest rumours of my object were reported, until eventually I found myself accredited with the title of an Italian prelate sent by Pius X. to enlist Zouaves. The curiosity was intense; the enthusiasm waxed hot, for Noord Brabant furnished innumerable Zouaves to Pius IX. Then I explained that I was a recruiting officer for spiritual exercises, not military drill; that I offered three days' training, three days which could be spent in prayer with God. I showed plans of the house, spoke of the results felt by men who had made a retreat, etc." *

These instances might be multiplied. It is not unnatural that men should fight shy of a retreat until they have actually made one. The ordeal sounds unattractive and even terrifying. Some are deterred by the prospect of having to keep silence; others by the thought that they will miss their favourite chair and see no newspapers. Some are afraid of learning too much about themselves; as a French writer has said, they fear the retreat as an ugly woman fears her mirror. But perhaps most are simply

* *Working men as Evangelists.* Catholic Truth Society.

not convinced that they need a retreat and that they will enjoy it. Hence it becomes necessary to keep the idea before them, to approach them from every side, to impress their imaginations.

Catholic Congresses have always been a profitable occasion for retreat propaganda. In the early days of the French retreats several leading Catholic laymen brought the work before the leisured and business classes in a series of impressive papers read at various congresses and conferences. These papers have been widely circulated and did much to familiarise the Catholics of France with the notion of popular retreats. Special mention should be made of the addresses delivered by the Count de Caulaincourt (1882); M. de Margerie, a professor of philosophy (1883); M. Thellier de Poncheville, a deputy (1884); the Count de Nicolay, M. Jonglez de Ligue, and the Count de Waziers.

We may remember, too, that it was at a Catholic Congress that the idea of introducing working men's retreats into Belgium first took shape, and that their organisation in England was urged at the Catholic Conference held at Brighton as long ago as 1906.*

Needless to say, the Catholic Press in all countries has been an invaluable medium for popularising the work of retreats. Indeed the literature of popular retreats has hitherto con-

* *Retreats for Workers.* Catholic Truth Society.

sisted mainly of press cuttings and reports. Many a retreat-maker has been attracted in the first instance by the reassuring description of a retreat which he has read in his weekly Catholic paper.*

The retreats are also brought to the notice of the people by means of posters exhibited at the church doors. The parish clergy have everywhere shown themselves ready to co-operate in this matter and thus enabled their parishioners to learn exactly when and where retreats are to be given. These posters are often reinforced by a word from the pulpit. Indeed the difficulties which must necessarily attend interparochial action appear to be singularly absent in this matter of retreats. Though the retreat-house may be geographically extra-parochial, the retreats are regarded as a parochial concern, an institution of which the parish gets the direct benefit. A notable harmony exists between directors of retreat-houses and the parochial clergy in all parts of the world. Any difficulties and misapprehensions which may exist at the beginning are soon removed.

A *curé* in a mining district in France tells us that for thirty seven years he had never seen a miner in his church, except for burial. He had tried every means of reaching the men, but

* A word of thanks is due to the editors of Catholic papers in England, especially the *Catholic Times* and the *Universe*, for their cordial interest in the retreat movement in this country.

in vain. Sermons and missions alike had failed. At last he announced a series of scientific lectures with lantern slides. Four hundred miners came. They were asked to come up to a big house for three days to discuss their interests with their fellow-workmen. Seven of them did so, with some hesitation. Now they come to retreat in hundreds, and the church is refilled. Some years ago twelve of them might have been seen at Lourdes in their working clothes, helping to carry the sick, taking part in processions and edifying all the pilgrims by their sturdy faith and piety.

But, as has been said, the best recruiting-sergeant for the retreat-house is the man who has made a retreat there. He comes again and brings his friends. How he gets hold of them is a mystery only known to himself; in many cases they are just the men whom one would never have expected to come. But the quiet propaganda goes on in factory and mine, in club and café, in office and shop. The personal influence tells. Newspapers and reports may be distrusted, but here is a man who has been there himself and is full of it. His enthusiasm convinces. A few examples may be given out of a large collection from many sources:

In 1900 a small parish in Belgium sent three men to make a retreat at Fayt. In 1901 these same three returned with fourteen companions.

In 1902 the group numbered thirty, and in 1903 it amounted to forty.*

The Burgomaster of Laerne sent three men to make a retreat—the first from the town. The following year the number rose to twenty-eight and has since gone on increasing steadily.

A man who had made a retreat at Epinay wrote:

"I have spoken to a large number of my comrades. I have persuaded many of them, and they have promised to come. I hope to bring them next year."

The sum charged for a three days' retreat is nowhere very considerable. On the Continent, in places where the retreats are not altogether free, it is generally from seven to fifteen francs. In New York it is five dollars. At Oakwood Hall it is twelve shillings and sixpence.

Yet even this sum may be a serious matter for a working man, especially when we add to it the cost of travelling and perhaps the loss of three days wages. If a workman is suddenly asked to make a retreat he may often plead that he cannot afford it.

To meet this difficulty a number of methods are in use with excellent results. Some are of the nature of savings banks to help the men to put by the money for themselves; others take the form of funds subscribed by others for the benefit of retreat-makers. The former are,

* *Le Cénacle*, February, 1903.

perhaps, the most satisfactory, though they need not exclude the latter.

Though it is better to get the men to pay their own expenses as a general rule, it is well to have the means of enabling those who really cannot afford it to enjoy the benefits of a retreat. Indeed such men often need a retreat more than others. Absorbed day by day in the harassing work of trying to find bread for their families, they need all the help which a retreat can give them. To meet their case we find, in connection with many of the retreat-houses, bourses established which enable a certain number of men to make a retreat. A family will contribute each year to the expenses of a retreat for ten or twenty men. Employers sometimes pay part or whole expenses of their employees. At Tronchiennes and elsewhere there are committees of gentlemen who collect alms for the purpose. Still more common are the committees of ladies which are found in many countries. One such committee (that of the Canton de Nivelles) paid for a hundred retreat-makers in a single year.

The savings-bank method, which enables the men to pay for their own retreats by degrees, has proved singularly useful and is capable of wide extension. A man will readily pay threepence a week during the year to the secretary of his club. The thing becomes automatic and the strain is not felt. When the time for the

retreat arrives the secretary writes out a cheque for the whole amount and there is no further trouble. Those who have already paid their money will be the less inclined to back out.

This supposes that every contributor makes a retreat. But sometimes even threepence a week is beyond the men's resources. So they pay a halfpenny or a penny a week and, at the end of the year, ballot for places in the retreat, or elect their representatives, or make retreats in turn. This plan has succeeded in the case of very poor districts in England, the generosity shown by the men being very remarkable. For such cases as these a supplementary fund contributed from outside would be particularly useful.

In some places these funds belong to the parish and rest in the hands of the parish priest. Thus in Holland an arrangement called the "retreat-penny" has been adopted in a large number of parishes. For instance the parish of Eindhoven in eighteen months collected about forty-two pounds, the pence being taken up by the ladies of the congregation who reap their reward, not in a picnic but in a retreat at some convent put at their disposition by a kindly reverend mother.*

But how do men of the working classes get away from their work for three days? The question is often asked; before the retreats

* *Working men as Evangelists*, p. 20.

were started it was often urged as an insurmountable difficulty. At all events the fact is there; the men *do* succeed in getting away in very large numbers and from every kind of work.

In countries like Belgium where there are a large number of Catholic employers the matter is simple enough. The men are given three days holiday for the purpose of making a retreat. Frequently their wages are paid during this time; sometimes their travelling expenses also. Nor is it only the Catholic employers who thus facilitate matters. Others also, who are alive to the best interests of their men, and who witness the excellent social results of these retreats, make the same arrangement. As the work becomes better known in this country we may hope that a certain number of philanthropic employers will, in addition to providing their men with playing-fields or club-houses, give them opportunities of making a retreat.

Pending this desirable consummation the Catholic workman in England who wants to make a retreat has to manage as best he can. A bank-holiday with the two days preceding it gives an opportunity to many who could not otherwise get away. In the north of England where the great industrial towns take their week's holiday in rotation, a continuous stream of retreat-makers is thus released during some of the

summer months; for men who know what a retreat is will gladly sacrifice half their holiday at Blackpool for the sake of making one. During other months men in different occupations (clerks etc.) can sometimes get three days off. Moreover there are the slack seasons in so many trades and callings. Those who can take their holidays when they will, are naturally urged to come for their retreat at the time when their less fortunate brethren cannot get away. In this manner, with a little careful organisation, many retreat-houses are full practically the whole year round.

The grouping of retreat-makers is a matter of some importance. The northern holiday arrangement just alluded to naturally results in the representatives of one town coming for a retreat at the same time. The tendency is excellent, for a retreat does much to pull men together, and the public opinion thus created is sustained when the men return to the same place.

Another very useful type of grouping is that according to professions or occupations. Where a special retreat is given to doctors, or lawyers, or journalists, or tobacconists, or grocers, or clerks, or undergraduates, or members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, or sodalists, or Poor Law Guardians, it becomes possible to adapt the retreat to the special conditions and needs of those who make it. A sound Catholic

public opinion is created in a definite section of the community. In particular, there is no better means of giving fresh life and enthusiasm to a Catholic club or society or guild than by getting the members of it to make a retreat together.

In England a certain number of these specialised retreats have been given, and the number is likely to increase. In particular it is to be hoped that retreats for youths may be organised with the same zeal which, as we have seen, has marked the institution of retreats for children making their first Communion. We may here quote from a letter written by a parish priest of large experience:

"There is a problem before every priest on the mission, as yet utterly unsolved: how to keep a hold on the lads and youths.

"The school children present little difficulty. The women may more easily be kept up. Even the men, in many places and with skilful organisation, may be kept together. The difficulty is with our lads and youths from fourteen years of age to eighteen. Some may suggest clubs. I have a club, a gymnasium, and a games' society. I have tried everything suggested so far, and must confess, with many others, to melancholy failure. The Electric Palace to-day outshines, for twopence, anything that we can offer them by way of recreation. Moreover, it has been my experience —and I have had a large one—that religion is not helped by such attractions.

"Retreats for men no longer need advertisement. They work wonders. The first retreat given to seventy of my men's sodality laid the foundation of one of the greatest, I may say unquestionably *the* greatest work that has ever been done in the parish.

"I say, let us have retreats for youths. Let it be made a feature of parish life. Let it be worked out with thought and system. I should suggest an age limit, from fourteen (turned) up to eighteen. The retreat must be a real, downright, serious thing —the first week of the *Exercises*. The meditations on salvation, sin, hell, death, should be insisted upon. I mention this because there is a tendency to give lads less solid fare in spirituality. It must be remembered that our youths to-day have to mix in workshop, mill, and foundry with mature vice and in an atmosphere of filth in which religion is scoffed at, virtue ridiculed, and morality unknown. A town lad of fifteen or sixteen needs strong antidotes, and the plainest of speaking. I am not merely giving you the benefit of a view. I have tried the experiment. I have sent several youths on retreat at my own expense when I have seen them falling, and in every case it has meant a lasting rescue. The manliness of the retreat appeals to a youth who is, of course, by nature chivalrous.

"This might be worked in conjunction with youths' sodalities, brigades, scouts, or anything else already existing, and must, I think, be worked apart from the ordinary retreats for men. I am contemplating forming a committee of youths to organise the work, to open a subscription fund,

THE FIRST RETREAT AT COMPSTALL HALL (See p. 115).

[To face p. 224.

and to start as spiritual recruiting officers. So far those to whom I have spoken are most enthusiastic. If I remember aright, his Lordship the Bishop of Salford once expressed his regret that there was nothing of this kind among us."

A point which has been touched upon more than once may here be emphasised, namely the importance of maintaining a high level of discipline in the retreat-house. Upon this, as experience shows, depends the success of a retreat.

A misguided sympathy for those who come to make retreats (especially when they belong to the working classes) might tempt us to make the retreat as "easy" for them as possible, to reduce rules to the bare minimum, to dispense with silence, to multiply amusements and to make the "talks" diverting and humorous. "These poor fellows are not monks or hermits; and moreover this is, in many cases, their only holiday. Let us give them a pleasant week-end."

In reality this would be to do a gross injustice to those who come for retreats. They do not come to have a slack time, to be amused or entertained. For that they would go elsewhere. The retreat-house cannot in this matter compete with seaside resorts. Men undoubtedly do say of a retreat: "This is better than a week at Blackpool," and they mean it. But what they mean is not that it is the same sort of thing only better. What they mean is

that it is better *and different*. If discipline goes the superiority is lost. The men will soon recognise this, and will forsake the retreat-house. On the continent it is the strict house that keeps up its numbers.

This point should be made clear to those who are invited to make retreats. "You will like it, yes! You will be glad you have come. You will come again. It will give you solid happiness. But it is not an easy time. It is not a lazy week-end. It means much hard work, honest effort, self sacrifice."

This personal work is absolutely necessary and the conditions required for it must be jealously guarded. As Cardinal Wiseman points out,* the Spiritual Exercises of a retreat must be practised; it is not enough to listen to a description of them. To listen to a course of lectures on physical development will not brace the muscles or increase the chest measurement; the real business begins after the instructor has given his lesson. It is so in a retreat, the only difference being that spiritual exercises are more liable to distraction than corporal, and are more dependent upon favourable conditions.

Hence unless the advantages of a retreat are to be lost, much stress must be laid upon recollection, silence, punctuality, method and the like. The men must be urged to put away all

* See Appendix A.

thoughts of their daily business or occupation. Correspondence should be dropped as far as possible. All their thoughts and energies should be given to the serious business of the retreat. As for silence, the more of it the better, In many places, as we have seen, the silence is absolute and continuous. Even where, for good reasons, talking is allowed, it is rigorously confined to certain specified and limited times, and even those who do not wish to avail themselves of the hours of recreation, are free to spend the time alone and in silence.

During meals it is usual to have someone reading aloud from a suitable book which will preserve the atmosphere of the retreat and enforce or illustrate the lessons of the meditations. It may be mentioned that in English-speaking retreat-houses the most popular books for this purpose appear to be Father Cuthbert's *Catholic Ideals in Social Life*, and Horgan's *Great Catholic Laymen*. Some at first find it difficult to attend to reading while engaged in the serious business of eating; but the difficulty usually becomes less, and there is no doubt that the reading leaves its impression.

A judicious " order of the day " may do much to relieve monotony without distracting the men. Rosary said in common, Stations of the Cross, hymn-singing and the like, all help to deepen the impression of the retreat, while at the same time they diversify the day. The singing need

not be artistically faultless; it is sufficient that it should be hearty, and hearty it generally is. I have heard singing in retreat-houses which might have vexed the soul of a musician; yet one would not have exchanged it for the Sistine Choir had the latter been on the spot and offered its services. The men put their hearts into it.*

In some retreat-houses a very satisfactory way of spending the after-supper recreation has been found in the providing of an informal lantern lecture. Scenes from the Holy Land, pictures of Rome, incidents in the life of our Lord and so on are thrown on the screen and talked about, the men, it may be, asking questions and offering observations. One may get quite new lights on Palestine by sitting among French peasants during that after-supper hour and listening to their comments upon the pictures thrown on the screen.

It may be objected that our plea for austerity and asceticism in retreat-houses is a protest against an established fashion. The reader who has visited Oakwood Hall or Haut-Mont, or Alken, or Durango cannot fail to be struck by the magnificence of these retreat-houses, the extent and beauty of the grounds. Everywhere there seems to be a deliberate plan

* A writer, describing a retreat at Bagheria, in Sicily, says: *S'intono il Veni Creator, cantato con affetto, ma con non troppo perfetta esecuzione* What did it matter? Those discords hammered at Heaven's gates.

to make retreat-houses spacious and imposing, to secure the finest sites, to impress the mind with splendour, and, it may be added, to secure the services of a good cook. The food, though plain, is abundant and well served. Starvation forms no part of the treatment. Indeed the objection is sometimes raised that these establishments are far too luxurious for working men who are likely to become dissatisfied on returning to their own homes. But experience has justified those who set the fashion of magnificent retreat-houses; and the very same reasons which lead us to value silence, recollection and strenuous work in a retreat should lead us to value beautiful chapels, spacious corridors, lofty halls, noble grounds and a well-served table. All these things help to the great purpose of a retreat. This is simply not the fact that they make men discontented with their lot; what they do is to make men discontented with their own selfishness and cowardice. The glorious grounds are employed not as the scene of a rowdy picnic but as the setting of calm and reverent converse with one's Maker. There a man may walk with God in the afternoon air; and it is well that there should be plenty of room for him to walk in, and that the best which nature and art can give should be all about him. Thereafter he will face the sordid battle of life with more courage.

CHAPTER XII

SUBSEQUENT ORGANISATION

It must by this time have become evident that retreats are capable of producing a deep spiritual change in those who make them. We have a cloud of witnesses to the efficacy of this now popular method. The retreat puts a man's life in order, opens out new horizons, gives him new ideals, and a standard, light and strength.

But even a three days' retreat cannot usually effect a lasting change of life unless it is reinforced and supported by some form of spiritual association. However fervent a man may feel after a retreat, however high his courage and firm his resolutions, he will almost certainly be dragged down by the ceaseless influences of his normal environment unless he can somehow manage to perpetuate the retreat atmosphere, to recall the lessons of the "hours of insight," to renew his resolutions, to reinforce his strength by periodic contact with others who have made retreats and who, like himself, would shape their lives according to the pattern there shown them.

It has been a matter of general experience

that wherever retreats, however numerous and fervent, have not been followed up by some sort of organisation for promoting the spiritual life of those who have made them, their effects have not been lasting. It stands to reason that the lessons of three days will be forgotten in three months unless special provision is made for the recalling of them.

Hence we are not surprised to find that in connection with nearly all the retreat-houses which have been described, there exist various types of sodality or confraternity for the purpose of keeping alive the spirit generated in the retreat.

These spiritual groups are for the most part organised on a parochial basis and are directed by the local clergy. They take the form of a Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, a Sodality, a Third Order, an Association for monthly recollection, or whatever type of spiritual society may suit local needs and preferences. As a matter of fact it does not seem to matter very much what particular type is selected; all depends on the zeal with which it is conducted. It has often been found better to make use of an existing sodality or confraternity rather than to erect a new one; but if fresh organisation is needed it is usually wiser to select one which is flourishing elsewhere, which has an inspiring tradition behind it, and which will give members the consciousness of being in spiritual union with an army of apostolic men.

It may be said at once that the chief function of these organisations is to form an élite to train a band of apostles. To belong to them should be regarded as a privilege which can be won and retained only by those who frequent the sacraments and aim at a higher level of spirituality than the ordinary jog-trotter. To draft men in crowds into such an association is to defeat its purpose and lower the standard. For this reason it has been found well to keep these purely spiritual organisations independent of—though they may well be connected with—benefit societies, sick clubs, recreation clubs, improvement classes and the like. There is always a danger lest the definitely spiritual aim of the apostolic group be obscured. That retreats have a social bearing and commonly lead to the creation or strengthening of social institutions will be shown in a later chapter; at present we have to consider the methods by which the high spirituality fostered in a retreat may best be maintained. It may come as a surprise to some to learn how organisations, which offer no inducement save opportunities of leading a higher Christian life, do attract the cream of Catholic manhood and womanhood and find particularly zealous supporters among the working classes in many lands But so it is. In this matter, it appears, we may set our standard high and be sure of a response.

The need of such a disinterested and zealous

élite in a parish has recently been recognised and set forth in a number of books, and pamphlets and magazine articles dealing with parish organisation which have been published in France and Belgium. A few points may be selected which seem to be of wider application.

Mgr. Walravens, the Bishop of Tournai, in April, 1903, wrote as follows to the organisers of retreats at Fayt:

"In these days no really serious and active parochial life is any longer possible save where the clergy find themselves surrounded by a group, however small, of deeply religious laymen, determined to support them in their laborious ministry.

"It is the retreat that must form these lay apostles on whom the priest will lean, and it is a spiritual association that must, after the retreat, band them together and secure their perseverance."

These words form the text of an excellent pamphlet by Père Dieudonné, the Guardian of the French Capuchins at Longpré, and entitled *Les Confréries du T.S. Sacrement et les Retraites fermées d'hommes en Belgique*,* the contents of which may here briefly be summarised, so far as they regard our present purpose.

The great need is to band men together for the serious practice of religion and to give them

*C.B.E., No. 4.

an apostolic spirit, grouping them closely round their clergy and their parish churches. It is a question of purely religious action. Here lies our chief strength: in providing material aid or entertainment we cannot compete with secular organisations.

One of the greatest obstacles to the leading of a spiritual life is human respect. The best way to surmount that obstacle is to concentrate —concentrate your picked men of a district in a retreat and subsequently in a spiritual association. Then they will support one another.

Besides supporting one another, they will exercise an apostolic action upon the whole community; and they will do it in ways which are not open to the priest. The layman must be evangelised in these days by the layman; in particular, the working man by the working man. Working men will listen to their leaders and to no one else. Hence we must form their leaders.

Père Dieudonné describes the actual working of the apostolic spirit in those who have made retreats in Belgium. The men go out transformed, determined to "renew all things in Christ." Their presence gives new life to parochial organisations: it leavens the world of labour. The sight of their splendid faith stirs the most apathetic. In churches where men came but seldom to the sacraments, men now flock to Communion in hundreds. They

gather for their monthly meetings with enthusiasm and hold great processions with their bands and banners. They are conscious of a great cause and fling human respect to the winds. More important still is their daily, untiring apostolate in workshop and factory.

The organisation is simple. Those who have made retreats are grouped into parochial leagues. They meet for half an hour each month under the presidency of their parish priest for a few prayers, a short talk, a little mutual encouragement and conference. In some places a popular apologetic class is added. These meetings are private and are held in a parish hall. Public meetings are also held once a month in the church, in many places on the first Sunday of the month. They consist of procession and Benediction: this is where the human respect gets broken down. Branches of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament are formed. In the district of the Fayt retreat-house there are six hundred such branches.

So much for the organisation in the parish. But what of the wider area? Here comes in the "Day of Recollection," which unites the parishes of a whole deanery. It is held two or three times a year in different centres, invitations being sent out by the clergy of the centre selected. There is a general Communion and an address from one of the Fathers from the

retreat-house. The morning meetings are private—devotions and business. The afternoon is given up to a public demonstration—in the open air if no building is large enough. Men pour in by hundreds from the villages. There is an address from a layman—a rousing lay-sermon—followed by Benediction and an act of consecration. The events of the day become the talk of the countryside and get into the newspapers. Laggards resolve to join the Confraternity and old members wax enthusiastic.

At the end of Père Dieudonné's pamphlet will be found some useful hints for the establishing of these Confraternities. Particular stress is laid upon the need of sound spiritual formation and the cultivation of an apostolic spirit. A priest who wishes to have a flourishing Confraternity in his parish must be ready to devote much time and trouble to training a little group of perhaps half a dozen really devoted and zealous collaborators. If, having selected his men, he can get them to make a retreat together, half the battle will be won. The rest is a matter of frequent intercourse and individual formation. We are reminded how our Lord, in addition to his public preaching, devoted Himself to a more intimate and continuous task—the formation of apostles.

Mention must here be made of an admirable

pamphlet by Père Watrigant, *De la Formation d'une Elite*,* which deals with the same subject. It is pointed out that the retreats, with their subsequent organisation, have in countless instances formed groups of men who have renewed the spiritual life of their parishes and brought back whole districts to the practice of religion. A number of striking examples are given of churches formerly empty and now filled, of parishes where the number of communicants has increased ten or twentyfold. The results have been gained not by general exhortations, but by getting hold of a few men, one by one, sending them into retreat and organising them into an apostolic group.

But perhaps the most systematic treatment of this subject which has yet appeared is contained in a pamphlet entitled *Un Plan d'Organisation Paroissiale*,† the author of which (it is an open secret) is Père Lechien himself, whose experience in the matter is unrivalled. The whole pamphlet deserves careful study: only the barest outline of it can be given here.

Père Lechien begins with a rousing appeal to the more influential Catholic members of the various classes, so many of whom, in face of modern evils, are apt to fold their arms, lament the situation and declare that nothing can be done to mend it. They forget that one of the

* C.B.E., No. 3.

† Fayt-Manage, Belgium, 1903.

worst ways of doing wrong is to do nothing. But there are others who, stirred by the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, are ready to act, and are in search of a plan of action. Such a plan is furnished in the pamphlet before us.

That the spiritual organisation of a parish should proceed upon a plan is much insisted upon by Père Lechien. System, so necessary in all highly organised human activity, is particularly necessary here. No amount of zeal or enthusiasm on the part of the clergy can make up for it. Parochial societies rise and fall, movements are started and for a time carried on with vigour owing to the personality of their promoters—but there is no real continuity, no progress unless parish organisation proceeds upon a definite plan. Better than the feverish attempt to do everything at once and by oneself would be the laying of foundations on which successors might build. To govern is to foresee. Not that it is possible for the apostle to know how long it will take for his projects to come to maturity, for it is God who gives the increase; but, at least, he can put method into his husbandry and prepare the field for those who come after him.

Père Lechien goes on to point out that though the priest may not neglect a single soul confided to his charge, yet it is to the working classes that, according to the wish of Leo

XIII., his heart is especially drawn; and in particular he takes an interest in the young men between fifteen and twenty-five, who stand in such urgent need of attention and on whom so much depends.

Stress is laid upon the need of a very careful classification of the working men of a parish, according as they are good, bad or indifferent. This classification will determine the entire plan of campaign. It is foolish to hope that the working classes will return to the practice of religion *en bloc*—that public opinion in the labour world will suddenly swing round to Catholicism in consequence of a strike or a conference. The work of conquest must be effected through the individual. But the priest, unaided, cannot reach many individuals: his only plan is to train the workman to evangelise the workman. He must have at his disposal a group of apostolic working men. The bulk of the working men can only be reached

"By men living in their own surroundings, by apostles dressed in their garb, having ambitions and interests in common with them, speaking their language, sharing their privations and their toil."

This does not in the least mean that the other classes of society are to be excluded from parish organisation. But it does mean that where, as is so often the case, the working classes predominate, working-class apostles

must be trained to reach them. This is particularly the case with those who have entirely dropped their religion.

As regards the merely apathetic and careless, we are reminded that the indifferent of to-day are the hostile of to-morrow. The young man is apt to drift. If he is not an active and convinced believer he is likely to become a pronounced disbeliever. If he comes to the sacraments only at very rare intervals he is likely to give up the sacraments altogether. Regular Communion is the only means of preservation in these days; and regular Communions, practically speaking, can only be secured by means of spiritual associations.

Moreover, if such associations are necessary for the indifferent, they are no less necessary for keeping up the enthusiasm of the fervent. Again, organisation can alone give permanence.

The men of a parish are often the last to be organised. Père Lechien regards this as a mistake. Get hold of the men first and the rest will be easy. Where religious association has been confined to women and children, the men will fight shy of it. The corner-stone of parish organisation should be a little group of earnest and devoted men. The rest of the building may then be put in hand. After spiritual associations for girls, mothers and young men, will come associations for social and charitable purposes and for recreation. These, following on

"THORNBURY," ISLEWORTH (See p. 126).

[*To face p.* 240.

the others, will possess a genuinely religious character. There will be no danger of their being Catholic merely in name, of their confining themselves to bearing the name of a Saint, putting a religious emblem on their reports, or having an annual Mass said for members. There will be no worship of merely material results—results which might be as well secured by unbelievers. Every institution will be instinct with the Catholic spirit, be it an agricultural society or a boys' club. Not that the same conditions should be imposed on all the members of these various organisations: a minimum of religious practice should be required of all, and a high standard exacted of the élite. Thus far, Père Lechien.

Perhaps the most instructive example of organisation subsequent to retreats, is that connected with the house at Fayt and built up largely by the genius of Père Lechien himself. Fayt, as we have seen, is the focus of six hundred Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament, besides a great Eucharistic League and a host of religious, charitable and social works. It may be worth while to examine more closely the ideas and methods which have proved so successful.

At the Interfederal Congress of Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament held at Fayt in July, 1911, a number of papers were read, which, taken together, give us a good notion

of the parish organisation to which this retreat-house has given rise.

"Our Confraternities," said one speaker, "are not simply associations for prayer: they are living cells—active and militant organisms." Once more, the idea is that of a little band of apostolic laymen with an enthusiastic devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, grouped about their priest and seeking to do all the good in their power—religious, charitable, social.

By way of indicating the spirit of these Confraternities, one of the speakers at the Fayt Congress told the story of the *Compagnies du Saint-Sacrement*, which flourished in France in the seventeenth century. It is worth while to recall that story here, for it illustrates the method which is being applied with so much success in Belgium to-day under the impulse of the retreat-houses.

These *Compagnies* were started in Paris by the Duc de Ventadour, aided by a Capuchin Father and the Abbé de Grignan, later Bishop of Uzès. This aim was wide. It was to unite fervent Catholics for the purpose of doing any good in their power. Every member heard Mass daily and had a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. They sought "to impress the teaching of the Church on their private life, on their families, on society, on the State." Each group (there were some fifty in the provinces by the middle of the seventeenth

century) met once a week for two hours under the presidency of a layman, assisted by a priest, six counsellors and six secretaries. Each member submitted a suggestion at every meeting—a case to be relieved, an evil to be checked, a work to be undertaken. These were discussed, and discussion was followed by practical action.

These Confraternities were never large. There was a rule which forbade the admission of more than two new members each quarter. The important matter was to keep the standard high.

The work these few men did was prodigious. They began by promoting the service of the Blessed Sacrament—providing lamps and ornaments, organising processions, etc. Then came works of charity—and St Vincent de Paul found many of his most zealous collaborators among the members. They built a hostel for the poor, which received sixty thousand persons in six years. They initiated night-refuges. They anticipated the modern work of the *Protection de la Jeune Fille*. They were the pioneers of credit-banks. They established information bureaux. They evangelised the soldiers in barracks. They opened a campaign against duelling. They fought against Jansenism; and, finally, they started the great *Séminaire des Missions étrangères*, in the Rue du Bac, Paris.

All these great undertakings sprang from devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, kept at a high pitch of intensity by a handful of devoted laymen.

Small wonder that the modern Belgian Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament, met in congress at Fayt, should seek inspiration from those Apostolic Companies of two hundred and fifty years ago. Here was the secret of parish organisation—religious, charitable and social. Secure the zealous élite and the rest would follow.

And so in Belgium, over and above the Confraternities, properly so called—the larger groups of good Christians who make an annual retreat, hold monthly meetings and make general Communions several times a year—we find a Eucharistic League, recruited from amongst the most zealous members of the Confraternities. The League is a distinct apostolic group with special Communions and meetings of its own. It is composed of men who are bent upon doing all the good in their power. In any one parish the members of the League may only number three or four; but they are worth a host of ordinary good Christians. They will take up any work that involves the Glory of God—getting up a retreat, pushing the Catholic Press, bringing people to the Sacraments, recruiting children from non-Catholic schools, putting life into a guild, starting a

social work, or whatever it may be. They are the right hand of their parish priest, and their inspiration is the Blessed Sacrament.

But let us see in more detail what sort of work is done by these Leagues. M. Jamart, the President of the Brussels Leagues, gives us an interesting account of their annual programme, from which we may take the following:

"*August* is devoted to the question of Catholic schools. The parish is examined, district by district, family by family. "X" does not send his children to the Catholic school. Who will go and talk to him kindly about it?

"*September*. Religious and moral state of the parish—again in detail. Immoral literature is floating about in this or that quarter: how to check it? So-and-so doesn't come to Mass. Who will bring him up?

"*November*. Apostolate of the retreats. New recruits beaten up for the following year.

"*December*. Apostolate of the Press. New subscribers obtained for Catholic papers. List of families where no paper is taken. How to get this or that paper into this or that library, restaurant, barber's shop, etc.

"*January*. Apostolate of Catholic social works.

"*March*. Apostolate of Easter duties. Systematic beating up of the careless.

"*April*. Apostolate of Confirmation."

The programme may vary according to circumstances. Pressing needs are met at once

and important enterprises may figure at every meeting during many months. The *agenda* for each meeting are proposed by the parish priest.

The production of such groups of men is the highest achievement of a retreat-house. Not that every man who makes a retreat is straightway transformed into an apostle. Retreats do a good work in keeping ordinary Christians on the lines, making good Catholics a little better, breaking habits of sin, raising the general level of piety. Retreats, in various modified forms, are given with profit to those from whom nothing very startling in the way of religious enthusiasm may be expected. But the finest flower of the retreat is the zeal of the apostolic layman. This, as we have just seen, is sustained in Belgium by the Eucharistic League.

It might be shown how, in many countries, we find various successful applications of the same method. Pious associations are organised for all who have made retreats and who wish to put a little more regularity and fervour into their spiritual life; and then, over and above, a special formation is given to the apostolic few, to the trained élite. The activity of the smaller group has a healthy effect upon the larger.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SOCIAL RESULTS OF RETREATS

Pope Leo XIII. has said that retreats procure "not only the sanctification of individuals but the general utility of society."

The reasons for this have been indicated in the first chapter, but may be dealt with more at length here and illustrated by the actual social improvement which has resulted from the work of retreats.

A prolific cause of social disorder is the restlessness which, as we have seen, pervades all classes. Now, one of the most striking results of a retreat is that it cures this restlessness as nothing else can. The scattered activities "condense to purpose strong," the random thinking takes a definite line, the crude enthusiasms are refined. Look at the faces of men as they come out of retreat and you will see that their "dose of calm" has had its effect.

A retreat provides just that needful element which other forms of social education lack. It supplies not so much information as formation. It betters a man's nature rather than his surroundings; and though we should wish to better

both, the former is the more important of the two. Moreover, as we shall see, even from the point of mere material improvement, these retreats have an important, though indirect, bearing. As long as minds are clouded and wills perverted, social reform is impossible.

The new outlook on life, gained in a retreat, cannot fail to result in an increased self-respect, a development of the social sense, a desire to remedy injustice and relieve oppression. All these things follow from an understanding of our relation to God. A retreat does not produce a mere fussy absorption in externals, a cult of committees, a fanatical faith in the influence of environment. It works from within, not from without. It puts man right with God and consequently with himself and his fellow-man. The leaven works by degrees. Character is built up and reacts on the whole tone of society. The personal weakness which improved surroundings cannot cure, is cured by a treatment which reaches the centre of personality. The atrophy which would only be increased by legislative splints is remedied by the *Exercises*. The baffling selfishness which is the despair of social reformers is exorcised.

Take, for instance, the sphere of family life. It is not necessary to insist on the importance of the family as "the prerequisite of production, the ordinary unit of enjoyment, the

foundation of national welfare and greatness, the principal source in the natural order both of virtues and happiness." * Now, a retreat is notably efficient in strengthening family ties. The selfishness which militates against a healthy family life—whether that selfishness takes the form of intemperance, neglect of conjugal duty, shirking of parental responsibility, laziness or bad temper—is frankly and squarely envisaged in a retreat, and an elaborate course of training is directed to its extermination. It is not surprising that wives and mothers should be anxious for their husbands and sons to make a retreat; and that in Belgium muscular peasant-women will sometimes escort their unsatisfactory male relatives to a retreat-house.

So in the sphere of the parish. The retreat-houses have no warmer supporters than the parish priest, who has seen their influence on parish life. His parishioners leave him for three days—but they return transformed. They rally round the parish church and are foremost in co-operation with their clergy. They seem to have caught the old Catholic instinct for parish duty, to understand the vital part played by the parish in the economy of the Catholic Church. The edifice, in which they meet on Sunday mornings, henceforth plays a larger part in their lives. It presents itself to them not merely as an institution " run " once a week

* *Political Economy.* By C. S. Devas. Book I., Ch. vii.

by Father Smith for their private convenience, but as a focus of religious, charitable and social activity. The parish becomes one big family, calling for manifold activities on the part of each member, for abundant sympathy and intelligent interest.

A still more astonishing effect produced by these retreats is the restoration of the old spiritual and personal bond between employer and employed, a bond which has too long been superseded by the " cash nexus." The representatives of capital and labour have wandered apart into hostile camps. An un-Catholic economic theory has split society into two. The cleavage has been accentuated by a propaganda which strives to foment class war. The whole conflict is regarded as a trial of strength, and the notion of sympathetic intercourse, of moral responsibility, of Christian brotherhood, is regarded as having no bearing on the controversy. " The brotherhood of man " is a device which has been annexed as a class war-cry. " The rights of property " has shared the same fate.

Yet the gulf is bridged in a retreat. Many an employer of labour has had his eyes opened by the process of making the Spiritual Exercises. He sees that the obligation of paying a living wage is a simple deduction from the elementary truths of Christianity. He becomes conscious of a network of duties towards his employees

of which he never suspected the existence.* He realises that he is not working a machine, but co-operating with a son of God. The revelation comes with a shock and leads to very practical results, as we shall see.

It is not claimed for retreats that they make factory legislation or wages boards unnecessary, nor that there is any prospect of getting the most offending employers into a retreat. Yet the results already secured in some countries have been sufficiently remarkable; and we must remember that even a few Christian employers may work together to give a definite direction to public opinion.

As an example of what has been done, we may recall the story of the *Association des Patrons Chrétiens* of the north of France.

Two years after the retreat-house near Lille had been founded, a retreat was given (September, 1884) for the first time to a group of Catholic industrial employers. No doubt, stray employers had joined general retreats before this. But now that much-abused class had a retreat all to themselves, and it was possible to emphasise the duties of their particular state of life. Due advantage was taken of the opportunity. The reading of the refectory included Bossuet's famous sermon on the dignity of the poor,† Abbé Fichaux on the

* See Leo XIII., *Rerum Novarum.*

† *Sur l'éminente Dignité des Pauvres.*

Workshop, Père Félix on *Social Christianity*, and the like. The afternoon conferences drove this teaching home and drew practical applications from it.

The employers, we are told, were genuinely alarmed. They were quite in earnest about their retreat and resolved to do their duty. They perceived that they had failed to recognise that duty in the past. Misled by the current practice and opinions of the class to which they belonged, they had overlooked the moral obligations which rest on the employer —obligations which are not confined to the payment of a fair wage.

Their duty soon became plain; but the difficulties in the way of doing it were enormous. The whole weight of industrial custom, opinion and competition was against them. Isolated efforts to restore the Christian standard had produced no appreciable effect, and in some cases had crippled those who had made them. An organisation of Christian employers was necessary in order to train public opinion and gradually to raise the standard.

Such an association was accordingly formed. Catholic employers were to meet at the retreat-house every two months for an afternoon and to discuss the possibilities of factory reform on Christian principles. The Abbé Fichaux, a professor of wide economic learning and much experience, was elected director. The

employers were alive to the need of grounding their studies upon sound theology.

The Association then proceeded to formulate its demands for effective legislation dealing with the employment of children, night work for women, and the length of the working day. It also resolved to promote international legislation on these points, and begged the Holy Father to " take up this great cause of the protection of the working classes in the entire world, and to summon an international congress to deal with these serious questions."

At the same time, the members of the new Association, though alive to the need of State action, did not suppose that the State could take the place of other agencies. Combined private initiative must be employed to Christianise the labour world. Hence a confraternity was established, to which the name of " Our Lady of the Factory " was given—a Confraternity which was to link employers and employed in a common brotherhood. In a few months the Confraternity was established in thirty-eight factories and numbered over three thousand members. Before long this number was doubled. A complete change of moral tone in the factories was the result. Fathers and mothers of families soon selected for their children those factories where the Confraternity was established.

Then followed the formation of a guild of

employers and employed, to improve material conditions, as the Confraternity had improved moral and religious conditions. Membership was optional in all cases, and the guild promoted insurance schemes, savings banks, co-operative societies, housing reform, etc.

As time went on, the new conception of the duties of the employer (or, rather, the old conception which had been forgotten), steadily gained ground. The number of associates grew, and their meetings every two months resulted in the formation of a solid platform of Catholic social reform. Other effects followed, such as the founding of a Faculty of Social Science at the Catholic University of Lille.*

But retreats have a social influence on the employed no less than on the employer. As we have seen, the bulk of those who have made retreats in the last thirty years have belonged to the working classes, and it is among these classes that the retreat seems to produce the most fruitful results. As the late Cardinal Archbishop of Mechlin put it:

"A happy experience seems to have proved conclusively that working men profit more by retreats than does any other class of the faithful. If these retreats could reach all my diocesans who

* For an account of the *Association des Patrons* see Père Leroy's *Histoire du Château-Blanc*. Paris: Bonne Presse, 1899. Also Père Watrigant's *Les Origines de l' Association des Patrons*. Lille: 1910.

toil and suffer I would be assured of their salvation."

Now, apart from high spiritual considerations, it is clear that the social welfare of the country depends on the moral formation of the working classes. Those classes are getting political power. How will they use it? Will they have an instinct for justice? Will they have a reverence for law? Is society to be torn apart by class hatred? Are honesty and self-control and high character to be held in honour? We cannot build up character merely by improving material conditions.

The fact that the working classes welcome retreats is reassuring from a social as well as from a religious point of view.

It is especially upon the leaders of the working classes that these retreats produce their most valuable effects. Of the promise and power for good, possessed by these leaders, Classen has said:

"The aristocracy of labour—they are the men that bear the future of the people in their hearts and hands. We find among them generous dispositions, great and even surprising abilities. How bright are their minds, how ready they are to learn, what fidelity they show to those who are well disposed towards them! These men live and believe in the vigour and health of our people."

It is not to the wire-puller, the noisy demagogue and the revolutionary that these words

refer, but to the men of quiet influence and high ideal, who exist among the working classes in consoling numbers, but whose voices are too often drowned by the mere agitator. The true labour leader is best trained in a retreat.

So of the rank and file of labour. A retreat fosters that healthy self-respect without which social well-being is impossible. It gives meaning to the phrase, "the dignity of labour." Work ceases to be a hateful task which is to be reduced to a minimum and abandoned as soon as possible. The dignity of work is seen to arise not from its compulsion, but from the spirit in which it is done. Improved workmanship and increased conscientiousness at once result. All that hinders ennobling work is at once resisted. The drink evil is combated with a success almost incredible to those who pin their faith to "cures" or legislation. Organisations to improve the social conditions of labour arise on every side. Co-operative societies and mutual associations are multiplied, sound social legislation is promoted, the weak are helped, and the helpless are supported without being pauperised. The gospel of selfishness and self-indulgence becomes discredited. The idea of fraternity supplies at last not a mere parrot-cry of class selfishness, but an illuminating guide in practical life and a force which makes for social solidarity.

Everywhere we find the same result. These

retreats strengthen and give new life to existing social and charitable institutions or create them where they do not exist. Bodies like the Society of St Vincent de Paul, the Ladies of Charity, parish clubs, diocesan charitable societies and the like, find that the retreats bring them fresh members and give new zeal to their old members. As for the institutions which have come into being through these retreats, they are beyond all reckoning, and include rural banks and professional societies, temperance movements and study clubs, housing associations, co-operatives, mothers' meetings, evening classes and farmers' leagues.

A word may be said in conclusion on the influence of retreats upon social study, and the corresponding influence of social study upon the retreats. Those who have made retreats become conscious of their social obligations and of the need of some social study if those obligations are to be performed. Thus we have seen that one result of the retreat movement in New York has been to lead to the formation of a " Laymen's League for Retreats and Social Studies."

Similarly, Catholics who are engaged in social study inevitably feel the need of an occasional retreat in company with those who are engaged in the same study. A feeling of responsibility urges them to take their bearings from time to time and to see that the religious

principles which form at once the basis and the motive of their study have not become obscured. It is this consideration that has led the Catholic Social Guild in England to organise retreats for its members.

For another striking instance of the connection between retreats and social studies, we may turn once more to Fayt. The retreat-house here is a spiritual power-station for a third of Belgium; and it naturally became a focus of Catholic social activity as well. Many are the important social conferences which have taken place within its walls. We may instance the *Semaine Syndicale* held there in September, 1911—a congress which dealt with the organisation of labour from a Christian standpoint. Many distinguished speakers took part in it, including a Cabinet Minister and several deputies. Particularly interesting was the account given by M. Brants (Louvain University), of the new bill dealing with collective contracts. Other subjects dealt with were insurance, accidents, pensions, wages and the general question of moral and material amelioration.

It is not an accident that social topics are so frequently discussed in retreat-houses. They are seen to have a bearing on practical Christianity.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LITERATURE OF RETREATS

The little town of Enghien may be reached from Brussels in about an hour. Ten minutes' walk from the station brings us to the College of St Augustine, formerly an episcopal school, now the house of Theology for two of the French Provinces of the Society of Jesus.

In a large, vaulted library on the ground floor is stored a collection of books, pamphlets, and newspaper cuttings of quite exceptional interest. They all have reference, more or less directly, to the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola.

It may frankly be admitted that the idea of such a library is not at first sight particularly attractive. Those for whom the book of the *Exercises* has no meaning will dismiss the library as an ingenious collection of rubbish. They will mentally consign it to that pulping-machine which, as Mr Belloc tells us, is the fitting destination of the bulk of our literature. Even those who value the *Exercises* (and precisely because they value them) will involuntarily shrink from what promises to be a wilder-

ness of commentaries on that remarkable volume. "Let us have the book of the *Exercises*"; they will say, "but spare us the tedious explanations the prolix adaptations and the watery imitations of the priceless heritage left us by a Saint. The book is itself a library: why accumulate a library about it? Let us make a clean sweep of these lesser men and draw what profit we can from the drill-book of God's scout-master.

A sufficient answer to such objections would be an inspection of the library itself under the guidance of the librarian, Père Watrigant. He, if anyone, is jealous for the integrity of the *Exercises*; yet that very jealousy has led him during the last thirty years to collect this library of six thousand books and pamphlets and manuscripts. Let him take you round it and the dry bones will live.

The distinguished Benedictine scholar Dom Besse, has given us his impressions of this library, to which he recently paid a visit:

"The Reverend Father has collected all the books he could find which bear more or less directly on the *Exercises* of St Ignatius. The result has been a wonderful library of ascetical and mystical theology. The library has become a workshop, and Père Watrigant does not work there alone, for he has disciples. These, in order to grasp the intimate thoughts of their founder, St Ignatius, ascertain with scientific exactitude the

place of the Society in the Church, and its rôle in the world of men. It is by means of the *Exercises* that the Society of Jesus remains true to its ideals, and adapts its members to their proper function. The aim of the Society is to impress the spirit of the *Exercises* upon the world. That spirit, rightly understood, is one of the most powerful manifestations of the traditional spirit of the Catholic Church."

These last words are worthy of remark. It has never been claimed for the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius that they have, so far as their substance goes, made any addition to the traditional Catholic teaching. They are but a masterly setting forth of truths which have ever been the common heritage of all Christians —a most effective systematising of ascetical methods known and practised in every age. That they are no more than this does not prevent them from being of inestimable value; but it should convince us that a library which deals with the *Exercises* may very well be a library of wide scope and absorbing interest: a library which should appeal to every intelligent Catholic.

Dom Besse continues:

"The study undertaken by Père Watrigant is remarkably opportune. His Superiors recognise this fact and give him every encouragement. It may even be said that he is creating a school. With his library of the *Exercises* he is leading

men's minds back to the sources of religious and Christian life. His example deserves to be followed by all the Religious Orders. The persecution which is now raging naturally tends to make this duty an easy one. Society in general would soon feel the effect of the forces which these Religious Orders had thus stored up within themselves."

The library of the *Exercises*, then, has a very practical aim. Within its walls may be gathered that knowledge of the ascetical life which may subsequently be translated into effective action and wise direction. Those who only know the *Exercises* can scarcely be said to know the *Exercises*. Even a few days spent in the library of Enghien will have the effect of setting the *Exercises* in perspective, and of throwing a flood of light upon their origin, their nature, and their possibilities.

This practical purpose which draws visitors to the library to-day is quite in keeping with the practical aim which presided at its formation. Père Watrigant is no mere academic book-collector. His interests are not confined to the sphere of speculation. When thirty years ago he began to collect books about the *Exercises*, it was in order that he might be able to give the *Exercises* more effectively and to organise retreats for the people in a manner which would ensure their success. Events justified his belief in the advantages of forming

and studying such a collection. For Père Watrigant became the pioneer of a movement of popular retreats which has spread over the world and produced such remarkable results.

And now he has returned to his books.

Ah, his books! They are his family. He knows every one of them, takes them from their shelves with a smile and with a hand that trembles a little in its eagerness, and caresses them tenderly. Each one has its own story and suggests a dozen others.

Thirty years of assiduous toil have gone to the building up of this library. It deserves more than a hasty examination. I feel desperately amateurish and unscholarly as I have to confess to the librarian that eight hours a day for ten days is all the time that I can manage to give to an inspection of his library. But he is far too courteous to betray his disappointment at my want of seriousness. It is arranged that during half of each day he will take me round, shelf by shelf; during the other half of the day I am to take notes, copy extracts, and in general digest the copious information already imparted.

In so short a time we can scarcely get more than a general idea of the library: tempting byways have to be left unexplored, alluring digressions resisted. The librarian's *Mais vous n'avez pas le temps*—uttered sadly but without reproach—checks many a pleasant

excursion into subjects connected with retreats.

The contents of the library are divided into four sections as follows:

1. The text of the *Exercises*.
2. The theory of the *Exercises*.
3. The practice of the *Exercises*.
4. The history of the *Exercises*.

Each section has numerous sub-divisions, some of which will appear as we proceed.

We begin, then, by a glance at the shelves containing the various editions of the text itself.* The Vulgate (Latin) version was first printed in 1548, and was one of the earliest books published by the Society of Jesus. It is quite eclipsed in magnificence by the splendid folio printed at Paris *typis argenteis* by order of Louis XIII.—among the earliest productions of the Royal Printing Press. It would seem that previous to 1610 the book of the *Exercises* was not intended for the use of those who made retreats, but merely for the guidance of those who directed them. But after this date it became the fashion to print the meditations on loose sheets to be given one by one to the exercitant. Such collections of leaflets were published in many languages.

Another sub-division of the first section deals

* For a concise account of the text of the *Exercises* see Père Debuchy's *Introduction á l'étude des Exercices Spirituels*. (C.B.E. No. 6.)

with the origin of the *Exercises*. These faded and peaceful-looking volumes are more explosive than we might suspect. They recall violent controversies, and contain much elaborate invective. Don Constantine Cajetan, for instance, maintains with warmth that the *Exercises* of St Ignatius are merely a reproduction of the *Exercitatorium Spirituale* of Cisneros the Benedictine. Don Cajetan's book is placed on the index. Father Rho, the Jesuit, replies with no less warmth—and likewise goes on the index. The discussion reappears in various forms in the course of time, but the invective becomes less robust.

The books on the theory of the *Exercises* comprise various analytical and synthetical studies of the *Exercises* taken as a whole, as well as monographs on particular parts of the *Exercises*, and books written in criticism or defence of the Ignatian methods.

A word may be said about each of these subdivisions. Explanations of the text abound in every language, and extend to the minutest detail. The names of Diertins, Roothaan, and Ponlevoy meet us here. After this analysis comes the bold synthesis of Suarez, Gagliardi, Palma, and the rest, in which the little volume of the soldier Saint is made to support a complete science of ascetical theology. The studies on separate parts of the *Exercises* are more numerous, and deal with methods of prayer

and meditation, of self-examination, election and so forth. We find thirty or forty books on the particular examination of conscience alone. Another sub-division includes books on the doctrine of the *Exercises*. By way of illustration or contrast we find a number of works on various schools of orthodox and heterodox asceticism. This section is growing rapidly, and should prove invaluable to the student. It is to be hoped that one day we may have a school of ascetical literature similar to the Bollandist School of Hagiography.

The third section, that dealing with the practice of the *Exercises*, is somewhat overwhelming. But Father Watrigant has a genius for sub-division, and has managed to reduce a chaotic literature to order. An important subdivision here is furnished by a multitude of books which give practical advice to directors of retreats, including, of course, the official *Directory* in its various editions. Then comes a still larger number of books which adapt the *Exercises* for various classes of people. Here is a remarkable book by Father Masenius, S.J., entitled *Nova Praxis orthodoxae Fidei.* It is an attempt to adapt the *Exercises* for the use of Protestants, and gave rise to a considerable amount of controversy. There are hundreds of books on retreats for priests and retreats for Religious. We note two beautiful manuscripts composed by the Carthusians on the *Exercises*

of St Ignatius, and two retreats for scholastics printed for the Jesuits of White Russia in 1793 and 1794 at the Imperial Press of Polotsk. The retreats for laymen are yet more numerous. We observe the stress that is laid by many of them on the sanctification not merely of the interior life, but of the exterior social life as well. The various " duties of one's state of life " are focused up in a number of works such as the *Triduum sacrum pro viris nobilibus et litteratis* of Father Neumayr, or the retreat *Pro Magnatibus* of Father Lancicius. There are retreats for Easter, retreats in preparation for death, retreats in Slavonic, and in the language of the Aztecs. And of course it was inevitable that the *Exercises* should be put into verse and tortured into dramas. We find Castilian songs on the *Exercises*, Italian poems on the same theme, dedicated to Pope Clement XII., by Mgr. Ansaldi, Father Christie's *The End of Man*, and Neumayr's *Ascesis Rythmica*. The *Theatrum Asceticum* has been so severely criticised that it is refreshing to learn that after witnessing a drama of Father Bidermann's at Munich, fourteen members of the Bavarian Court promptly fled into solitude and made what is described as a very rigorous retreat.

Among the artistic adjuncts to the *Exercises* we notice the ingenious pictures used by Father Huby in his famous retreats in Brittany. They portray a series of hearts, each containing sym-

bolical representations of virtues or vices. These pictures have had an interesting history. They had done good service long before Father Huby popularised them, and they continue to be in fashion at the present day. The Calvinists pirated them extensively, and published them with descriptive texts in various languages. It is interesting to study the development of these collections of pictures—*Le Miroir de l'Ame*, *The Heart Book*, *The Mirror of the Heart*, etc.—and to observe the transition from the crude original designs to the elaborate and more or less artistic productions of recent years.*

To the general visitor perhaps the most interesting section of the library is the fourth, which deals with the history of retreats. These volumes recall the wonderful work done by the old houses of retreats, and tell us much of the recent movement which has spread to every part of the world and is working wonders no less striking. We find here the lives of such directors as Father Huby and Father Maunoir, Blessed Peter Faber, the Ven. Fathers Alvarez and Segneri, St Francis Jerome, Fathers Calvi, Lentini (the founder of nine retreat-houses in Sicily), Father Malagrida (the organiser of retreats in Brazil and Portugal, and the victim of Pombal's spite), and many more.

* C.B.E., No. 33. These books are very popular in India, where they are published in the native languages by various Protestant missionary societies.

We see the lives of the foundresses of retreats in Brittany and elsewhere. This copy of the *Exercises* (picked up by Father Watrigant for ten centimes) was used by Mdlle. de St Luc in her retreats at Quimper. She was afterwards guillotined at Paris for having distributed pictures of the Sacred Heart. Here is the book attributed to Hercules the Third, Duke of Este. He founded a retreat-house near Modena, and insisted on his whole Court going thither. They seem to have had a remarkable good time, and the Duke did them well. There were no meditations, but to compensate for this trifling omission the Duke had painted some three hundred pious inscriptions on the walls and furniture of the retreat-house, including the seats in the garden. As to whether the retreat was followed by any abnormal access of piety at the Court of Hercules the Third, history is provokingly silent.

Turning finally to the recent history of retreats we find shelf after shelf of documents arranged according to countries.

We pause in front of half a dozen shelves filled with cardboard cases, each bearing on the back the name of a retreat-house or a group of retreat-houses. These cases contain reports, cuttings, pamphlets, and other printed matter. The famous retreat-house near Lille, has several cardboard cases all to itself: for it marked a new area in the history of retreats,

and moreover—was started by Father Watrigant himself. From it sprang the great Association of Catholic Employers of the north of France, about which something has been said.

Each of the six Belgian houses for men has a case to itself. England is represented by a well-filled case which threatens to overflow. North America has already overflowed. Germany, Austria, Holland, Spain, Italy, Poland, Canada, South America, Chili, China, Madagascar—there seem to be retreats everywhere.

Two or three of the retreat-houses publish monthly magazines, and thus keep those who have made retreats up to the mark. *Le Cénacle*, published at Fayt, is particularly successful, and has been running for about ten years.

The monthly bulletin *Manresa* was started at Arlon in 1907. The house at Venlo (Holland) in 1908 launched a similar periodical *Manresa-bode*. These little magazines do much to keep the old retreat-makers in touch with the work and to win fresh recruits. It is to be hoped that a similar publication may some day appear in England.*

It must be added that the stores of literature gathered in the library at Enghien are being

* An important monthly publication, *Echo des Retraites fermées*, has just been started (Rue Saint-Honoré, 368, Paris : 1 fr. 50 a year) and may be warmly commended to all who are interested in the subject.

made accessible to all by the publication of a most valuable and interesting collection of cheap books and pamphlets. Six pamphlets have appeared every year since 1906, and they deal with the *Exercises* from various points of view. Some are historical studies of famous retreat-houses, others describe methods of organisation, others are critical or devotional studies of the *Exercises*.

Thus the series for 1906 includes a pamphlet containing the encomiums of Pius X. on popular retreats, accounts of retreats at Vannes and Bologna in the seventeenth century, and the directions for subsequent organisation by PP. Dieudonné and Watrigant already referred to. The second series contains papers by Fr. Meschler and Père Watrigant on sections of the *Exercises*, a bibliography, an account, by a Redemptorist, of the retreats organised by St Alphonsus Ligouri, etc; the third includes a history of Catherine de Francheville, of Ponterotto, of retreats for deaf mutes, of the manuscript corrections added to the *Exercises* by their author, and so forth.*

Besides these pamphlets, there is a series of books (also published by Lethielleux) entitled, *Collection des Retraites Spirituelles*, which

* These pamphlets (which have been largely employed in the present volume) form a regular mine of information about retreats. They may be obtained from Lethielleux, Paris (10 Rue Cassette) and cost four francs a year, including postage to England.

deal with the practice of retreats. Some are reprints of famous treatise no longer easily accessible, others are original.

It is much to be hoped that the publication of this literature will lead to an increase of interest in the great movement of retreats. Viewed as the record of that movement in the past, and as an abiding source of encouragement and guidance in the present, the library at Enghien no longer presents itself to us as a fusty collection of forgotten books. It becomes the centre of the movement which, under God's providence, is doing much to check the rising tide of lawlessness, pessimism, and infidelity.

APPENDICES (Statistics and Documents).

APPENDIX A.

The following passage is taken from the Preface written by Cardinal Wiseman to the edition of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius published by Dolman in 1847 and edited by Mr Charles Seager:

"There are many books from which the reader is taught to expect much; but which, perused, yield him but little profit. Those are few and most precious, which, at first sight, and on slender acquaintance, seem to contain but little; but the more they are studied, the more instruction, the more solid benefit, they bestow: which are like a soil that looks bare and unadorned, but which contains beneath its surface rich treasures that must be digged out and drawn from a great depth.

"To this second class I know no book that so justly belongs as the little work here presented to the public. The Word of God, in His Holy Scriptures, is beyond everything else that has been written in this, that without it is all fair, and within all rich; that it is perfect to the eye that looks for beauty and to the understanding that seeks for hidden wisdom. In the *Exercises* of St Ignatius, on the other hand, many will be no doubt disappointed, when for the first time they look into them. They have heard of the wonderful effects which they have produced, of the innumerable conversions which they have wrought, of the spiritual perfection to which they have led; and they will see in the text of the work itself nothing but simplicity of form,

plainness of sentiment and diction, hints often rather than explanations, germs of thought rather than developments, skeletons often more than perfect forms, sketches instead of pictures; no poetry, no emotions, no high-flown ideas, no enthusiastic aspirations; but maxims of eternal import inculcated with the calmness of a philosopher; the sternest truths delivered as obvious and self-demonstrating propositions; the sublimest moral lessons of the Gospel, self-denial, renunciation of the world, contempt of life, perpetual continency, and blind obedience, taught as simple virtues attainable to any Christian. And yet throughout there is a manifest conviction of the adequacy of the means to the end in the writer's mind; there is nothing experimental, nothing optional, nothing left to be discovered; but every method is laid down as certain, every result reckoned on as sure. It is a plan framed by a master-mind (unless we admit a higher solution) capable of grappling with perhaps the most arduous and complicated task, and, without overlooking a difficulty, and apparently without proportionate means, confident of its success. A man is presumed to enter into the course of the Spiritual Exercises in the defilement of sin, under the bondage of every passion, wedded to every worldly and selfish affection, without a method or rule of life; and to come out from them restored to virtue, full of generous and noble thoughts, self-conquering and self-ruling, but not self-trusting, on the arduous path of Christian life. Black and unwholesome as the muddy water that is poured into the filter, were his affections and his soul; bright, sweet, and healthful as the stream that issues from it, they come forth. He was as dross when cast into this furnace, and is pure gold when drawn from it.

* * * *

"It is clear that if these various principles and feelings have been really infused into us, if they have been worked into our hearts, so as to form a part of their real practical influences, we shall come from the *Exercises* duly performed, completely

changed, and fitted for our future course. Many indeed have experienced this. They have entered the place appointed for them, like a vessel shattered by the storms, bruised and crippled, and useless: they have come forth, with every breach repaired, every disfigurement removed; and, what is of more importance, furnished with rudder and compass, sails and anchor, all that can direct and guide, impel and secure them. What wonder, if their songs of gratitude and joy resound along the main?

"Two things will perhaps strike the reader as drawbacks to the attainment of this object: first, the scantiness of matter furnished in the book for filling up the time; and secondly, the obvious want of a regulating and adapting power in its application. For it is clear, that the work of one week should be continued till its object is attained, and the exercitant is prepared for the impressions of the next. These apparent wants are supplied by one essential element of a spiritual retreat (for so the *Exercises* reduced to action are popularly called), *Direction*. In the Catholic Church no one is ever allowed to trust himself in spiritual matters. The Sovereign Pontiff is obliged to submit himself to the direction of another, in whatever concerns his own soul. The life of a good retreat is a good director of it. He it is that modifies (not arbitrarily but by fixed rules and principles) the order of the *Exercises*, diminishes their number, and curtails their duration; he shortens and lengthens each week, and watching the workings of grace on each one's spirit, suppresses meditations, or introduces additional ones, to second them. It is he who prepares materials for the exercitant to meditate on, divides the subject for him into its parts, suggests its applications, and leads him step by step through his various duties. He wards off or suppresses disturbing emotions, spiritual dryness, dejection, and scruples; he represses over-eagerness, rashness and enthusiasm; and regulating the balance of contending affections, endeavours to keep all at a steady and peaceful level, so that the grace of God may gently, and, as it were by a breath, move

and regulate every determination. Let no one think of undertaking these holy *Exercises*, without the guidance of a prudent and experienced director.

"It will be seen that the weeks of the *Exercises* do not necessarily mean a period of seven days. The original duration of their performance was certainly a month; but even so, more or less time was allotted to each week's work, according to the discretion of the director. Now, except in very particular circumstances, the entire period is abridged to ten days; sometimes it is still further reduced. But even so, the form and distribution of the *Exercises* must be strictly kept, and no anticipations or inversions must be permitted. It is impossible to make the slightest change in this respect without injury. Gladly would I enter fully into this subject, and show the admirable and beautiful chain-work which connects all the exercises or meditations from the first to the last, connects them as clearly and as intimately as any series of sound mathematical propositions can be connected. But it would take a long essay to do justice to this matter.

"It is, however, to this logical and argumentative arrangement that the *Exercises*, in great measure, owe their certainty of result. The mind may struggle against the first axiom, or rather demonstrable truth, in the series; but once satisfied of this, resistance is useless, as unreasonable; the next consequence is inevitable, conclusion follows conclusion, and the triumph is complete. The passions may entrench themselves at each step, behind new works, but each position carried is a point of successful attack upon the next, and grace at length wins their very citadel. Many is the fool who has entered into a retreat to scoff, and has remained to pray.

* * * *

"What has been said will perhaps explain, though inadequately, the wonderful power and efficacy of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, in thoroughly reforming the soul, and bringing it

from sin to steady virtue. But the grand secret may be said to consist in two points.

"First, the entire work is performed by *principles*, not by emotions which pass away. Conviction of the truth and reality of all that is inculcated is aimed at and secured; reason is enlisted on the side of conscience; and whatever use is made of the feelings in the course of the *Exercises*, is but as scaffolding to assist in the erection of a solid structure of virtue, which will stand, and weather the storm, after it has been removed.

"Secondly, the mind is made to act throughout, and to work out its own resolutions. Nothing is imposed on us by others, either through persuasion or by authority; we are made to think, to conclude, to determine, and to act, by a process essentially our own; so that there is no escape, and no danger from the reaction of self-love. No influence has been used, further than to guide rightly the exercise of our own powers; and even that direction has been given to us with our eyes open, and under the full conviction that we cannot shrink from a single step, without going against reason and conscience."

APPENDIX B.

As an example of the order of the day followed in a retreat-house we may give that which was drawn up for Compstall Hall.

RETREAT ORDER OF THE DAY

6.30	Rise. Morning prayers in the Chapel. Instruction in the Chapel.
7.15	Mass.
7.45	Breakfast. Recreation.
8.45	*Instruction* in the Chapel. Meditation in rooms.
9.45	Free time in rooms or grounds.
10.15	Visit to Chapel. Public prayers.
10.30	Spiritual reading (Imitation of Christ) in rooms or grounds.
10.45	Free time.
11.30	Instruction in the Chapel. Meditation in rooms.
12.30	Free time.
12.45	Visit to Chapel. Private prayers and preparation for Confession.
1.0	Dinner. Recreation.
3.0	Visit to Chapel. Stations of the Cross. Free time in rooms or grounds.
4.0	*Instruction* in the Chapel. Reflection in rooms or grounds.
4.45	Tea. Free time.
5.15	Rosary in the Chapel.
5.30	Spiritual reading in rooms or grounds.
6.15	*Instruction* in the Chapel. Meditation in rooms.
7.15	Benediction.

7.30 Supper. Recreation.
9.0 Night prayers in the Chapel. Examination of conscience.
9.15 Instruction in the Chapel. Retire to rest.
10.0 Lights out.

N.B. 1. All are earnestly requested to observe silence strictly except during the times (after breakfast, dinner, and supper) allotted to recreation, when those who wish may converse either in the grounds or in the hall.

2. Promptitude in beginning all the duties, especially those in the Chapel, is earnestly urged upon all.

3. Free time may be spent in one's room, in the grounds, or in the Chapel.

4. If anything is needed, application should be made to Father Superior.

APPENDIX C.

THE LAYMEN'S LEAGUE FOR RETREATS AND SOCIAL STUDIES

This League opened its "School of Social Studies" in New York City in 1911. The school is intended "to train a corps of Catholic lecturers upon social questions of the time, so that they may be able to spread among Catholic men—and particularly among Catholic working men—a sound knowledge of social facts and of the principles in the light of which these facts are to be interpreted."

"From those who undertake the course of study at the school with the object of fitting themselves to be competent lecurers, there will be expected earnest work and devotion to the social crusade which the League has inaugurated."

The corps of lecturers "will be sent out to parish societies, clubs or any form of Catholic organisation that may desire their services at any time. The lecturers will give their services free of charge (although travelling expenses may be provided) on the condition that no admission fee be charged to the lecturer."

These lectures will be given under the auspices of the League and arrangements for them will be made by the secretary. No lecturers will be sent out to represent the League until they have demonstrated their entire competency in and mastery of their subject.

Besides special courses of lectures for its own students, the League is organising fortnightly popu-

lar lectures in the Cathedral College, New York. Among its lecturers are Professor John A. Ryan, Dr Conde B. Pallen and Dr J. J. Walsh. The offices of the League are at 140 Nassau Street, New York City.

APPENDIX D.

RETREATS AND THE SODALITY

Mention has more than once been made of the part played by the Sodality of Our Lady in promoting the work of retreats in various countries. Something may here be added on the suitability of the Sodality as an organisation for carrying on the spiritual work done in a retreat, and for giving direction of the apostolic spirit which a retreat commonly generates.

The Sodality in fact succeeds in forming that lay élite which, as experience shows, is the prerequisite for successful, charitable, and social work, no less than for the maintaining of a high standard of spiritual life in a parish. It is both stimulating and flexible; it has a great tradition behind it, and it is capable of accommodating itself to the various needs of any locality into which it may be introduced.

Those who wish to know something of the traditions of the Sodality may be referred to a booklet entitled *The Story of the Sodality of Our Lady* by Father Edmund Lester, S.J. and published by Messrs Washbourne. Suffice to say here that the Sodality has included on its roll of members such names as those of St Francis de Sales, St Charles Borromeo, St Peter Claver, St Francis Jerome, St John Francis Regis, St Peter Fourier, B. John Eudes, B. G. de Montfort. Blessed Edmund Campion was among the first founders of the Sodality, having even before his priesthood founded a Sodality of Our Lady for men at Prague. As foundresses we find Blessed Sophie Barat and Blessed Julie Billiart. Sœur Térése (the " Little

Flower of Jesus") was a Sodalist as was also Bernadette. Among the Sodalist Popes mention should be made of Pius IX. and Leo XIII.

As regards the flexibility of the Sodality, Cardinal Vaughan in his little booklet on *The Work of Sodality of Our Lady in England* has written as follows:

"No labour of charity comes amiss to them: be it the opening of a mission, the building of an altar or a church, the decoration of the sanctuary, the bringing of negligent people to Mass on Sundays, the rescuing of children from perversion, the filling of the schools, visiting the sick and the poor, the circulation of good books, the formation of church libraries, working for foreign missions, even collecting to pay off debts. There is no field of labour in which the children of Mary may not be found reaping or gleaning, as the case may be. It is wonderful what they accomplish in a mission where they have a good director."

More recent testimony to the same effect is supplied by the Sodality Congresses which have been held during the last few years especially in German-speaking countries. At these Congresses which are attended by thousands of Sodalists and at which papers are read by Benedictines, Capuchines, Jesuits, and Redemptorists, secular priests and laymen, practical resolutions are passed concerning such subjects as Public Morality, works of Charity, the Press and so forth.

These Congresses have resulted in an immense increase in the number of Sodalities and in the organisation of Sodality "sections" to meet every kind of need. Eucharistic sections to promote frequent and daily communion and visits to the Blessed Sacrament, charitable sections for the work of the St Vincent de Paul and other societies, Mission sections, Cæcilia sections for the study of church music, Altar sections, Literary sections, Press sections, etc.

All these various activities spring naturally from

the intense Catholic life of the members. The Sodality is not, as some imagine, a mere confraternity of prayer for practising a few simple devotions in common but rather *a school of religious perfection for the laity*. It thus forms a natural complement to the retreat, the influence of which it perpetuates and directs to every form of apostolic work.

APPENDIX E.

STATISTICS OF RETREATS FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN (ENGLAND).

I. *Convents giving retreats all the year round.*

(i) The Cenacle, Alexandra Park, Manchester:

	1910	1911
Ladies	65	68
Teachers ...	31	50
Women	82	92
Working Girls ...	730	765
Children ...	1908	2538
Total	2816	3513

(ii) The Cenacle, 63 Stamford Hill, London, N.:

Ladies	168	194
Teachers ...	20	22
Women	50	79
Working Girls ...	186	209
Children (11-14 years)	296	321
Children (1st Communion)	169	277
Total	889	1102

(iii) The Cenacle, 7 Lance Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool:

Women		35
Working Girls ...	110	107
Children ...	488	250
Total	598	392

II. *Some London Convents giving retreats to Working Girls in August.*

	1910	1911
Coventry Hall, Streatham, S.W.	56	63
The Convent, Nightingale Square, Balham, S.W.	30	30
Convent of the Sacred Heart, Wandsworth, S.W. ...	55	63
"Colona," West Croydon, S.W. (Ladies of Mary) ...	64	64
Notre Dame, Clapham, S.W. ...		62

APPENDIX F.

STATISTICS OF RETREATS FOR MEN.

AUSTRIA.

FELDKIRCH.

	1897	1907	1908	1909	1910
Priests ...	589	834	755	822	956
Students ...	228	299	315	360	295
Laymen ...	220	795	1084	904	917
Total	1037	1928	2154	2086	2168

(Total for the first ten months of 1911 ... 2461)

BELGIUM.

	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911
Fayt	2130	2892	3312	2805	2284	2057	2366	1810	1692	1752
Ghent ...	1240	1343	1274	1253	1217	1245	1314	1504	1693	1545
Arlon ...	527	428	895	1177	1404	1408	1300	1458	1307	1299
Lierre ...	2845	2583	2217	1825	1645	1881	1692	1929	1620	1583
Liége	1750	1753	1629	1375	1628	1673	1720	1617	1688	1744
Alken ...				524	1256	1615	1139	1316	1356	1335
Tronchiennes	516	572	532	505	433	522	600	512	517	490
Totals ...	9008	9571	9859	9464	9867	10401	10131	10146	9873	9748

Grand Total for the last ten years ... 97,868 men.

COLOMBIA.

In 1903, 20 retreats at 7 centres to 2047 men.
„ 1904, 32 „ 10 „ 3729 „
„ 1905, 19 „ 5 „ 2380 „
„ 1906, 40 „ 8 „ 10033 „
„ 1907, (Numbers not ascertained)
„ 1908 to March, 1909, retreats to about 18,000 men.
„ 1909, many retreats, including 5 at Salamiria to 3200 men, and 11 at Bucaramanga to 4000 men.

ENGLAND.

CHESHIRE.

Compstall Hall,	1908 ...	265
„ „	1909 ...	400
Oakwood Hall,	1910 ...	452
„ „	1911 ...	505
Total for four years		1622

GERMANY.

VIERSEN.

	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911
Retreats	5	26	30	25	31	41	40
Men	106	1064	1249	1200	1412	1823	2006

The above figures included the following retreats for recruits:

Retreats	2	6	9	12	16	18	19
Recruits	51	190	343	647	862	1005	1190

EMMERICH.

(7th April to 10th November, 1911)
911 men, including 226 priests.

RETREATS FOR RECRUITS:

1910 ... 4305 recruits
1911 ... 5647 „ including the following:

Viersen, 1190
Münster, 1650
Werl (Paderborn), 1067 [Franciscans]
Besides much smaller numbers at about twenty other centres.

HOLLAND.

VENLO.

	1908*	1909	1910	1911
Retreats ...	29	61	64	70
Men	1414	3301	3832	4261

ITALY.

ROME.

Retreats for Workmen, Sept. 1909 to Sept. 1910:
5 retreats to 153 men.

Retreats for Workmen, Sept. 1910 to Sept. 1911:
5 retreats to 150 men.

TURIN.

To Sept., 1911 ... 18 retreats to about 800 workmen.

MILAN.

In 1 year ... retreats to 500 workmen.

FLORENCE.

In 1908 and 1910...3 retreats to 87 workmen.

BERGAMO.

In 1910 ... 4 retreats to 150 workmen.

Other retreats at Bagheria, Gozzano, Chieri and Genoa.

SPAIN.

DURANGO.

1908-1911 ... 81 retreats to about 1800 men

* From 6th June.

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PLATER, CHARLES
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